

Extract from the forthcoming study *'Recognition of school study periods abroad in Europe – an overview and policy recommendations'* by the European Federation for Intercultural Learning-EFIL , with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme, KA2 Strategic partnership 'Intercultural learning for pupils and teachers' funded by AEF Europe. The information is based on the information provided by 22 AFS organisations and 5 YFU organisations in January 2018.

	country	10 month secondary school study period abroad recognition system
1	ITALY	yes (law issued originally in 1944, updated in 1994), upon return the students need to provide to the school the documentation released by the hosting school. Before departure students discuss with the teachers what are the 2-3 subjects not present in the hosting school and that are absolutely necessary they study before entering the next year. Upon return, also after the academic year has started, the teachers proceed to a 'global assessment of the students' competences' on the basis of an interview. Some schools still ask to do some exams for some specific subjects. All students are admitted to the next year and catch up.
2	FRANCE	yes (law issued in 2017), if there is a special partnership between sending and hosting school and a learning agreement. When the student comes back s/he gets an international experience certificate and if s/he respected the school agreement s/he can be enrolled in the next year. If there is no special agreement between sending and hosting school, the student needs to take an exam in the sending school and the content needs to be agreed by the person in charge of the school curriculum at regional level (inspecteurs d'académie-directeurs académiques des services de l'éducation nationale - IA-Dasen). Very much depends on the willing of the school principal to organise this exam.
3	SPAIN	yes, on the basis of a transcript of grades from the school abroad, translated in Spanish by an official translator + apostille of hosting country. Very few students are granted the validation of the year and this depends mostly on what is the hosting country: 100% students who go on exchange in the USA get the period abroad recognised. For other hosting countries the percentages are very low (2-3%). There is no partial recognition, either the transcript of record provides all the elements to validate the year, otherwise students need to repeat the year. They can also take the exams for all subjects in September to enter the next class but exchange students to do it rarely.
4	PORTUGAL	yes (law issued in 2005), students need to be enrolled in the equivalent year and bring to the Ministry of Education an official certificate issued by the host school with reference to the year, with list of subjects and transcript of grades translated and with apostille. However, students tend to go on exchange in the last year of high school and prefer to take a gap year after in order to study for the exams to enter university.

5	SWITZERLAND	no, there is no law but schools are highly autonomous and can decide whether to admit a student in the next class, on the basis of a transcript of grades from the hosting school. Most schools insist on a minimum grade point average in order to have the exchange period being recognised. Some schools make students take an evaluation test, some put the students on an assessment level for a semester (they drop out if they fail to have average marks).
6	AUSTRIA	yes (law 1995). Every student that goes abroad from 5 months to full school year gets full recognition of the study period abroad. The student need to provide to the school a confirmation of attendance and no transcription of grades or list of school subjects of the hosting school.
7	SLOVENIA	yes, on the basis of a transcript of grades from the school abroad, accompanied by the curriculum of the subjects (it is fine if it is in German, French, Italian, English). The school evaluates the host school curriculum and the transcript and decides which additional exams the student need to take to be admitted to the next year (mostly the subjects that are part of the final exam to get a secondary school diploma). Half of the exchange students decide to take a gap year.
8	CROATIA	yes, on the basis of a transcript of grades from the school abroad, translated in Croatian by an official translator + apostille of hosting country. The school evaluates the transcript and decides which additional exams the student need to take to be admitted to the next year. If documents are correct, the period abroad is validated easily.
9	SERBIA	yes, on the basis of a transcript of grades from the school abroad, translated in Serbian by an official translator + apostille of hosting country. If documents are correct, the period abroad is validated easily. The documents are received and examined by the Ministry of Education.
10	HUNGARY	no, students coming back from the year abroad can study over the summer and take the exams organised by the school, and therefore pass the year and be entitled to enter the next year. This is done by approx. 30% of the exchange students, most of the students take a gap year, especially if they go abroad in 3rd or 4th year of secondary school since the grades received at the end of the year count for the final exam.
11	CZECK REPUBLIC	no, students go on exchange on 6th grade and when they come back they can study to pass exams and enter directly the 7th grade. This is done by approx. 50% of the exchange students. Headmasters have a huge influence and allow or not the students to take the exams.

12	SLOVAKIA	yes, on the basis of a transcript of grades from the school abroad which is provided to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education then proceeds to the conversion of the grades. If the documents are correct, the period abroad is validated easily. The headmaster then decides which extra exams the student need to take (eg. Slovak language).
13	ROMANIA	yes, on the basis of a transcript of grades from the school abroad which shows that the student has passed the year in the hosting country. An important condition for recognition of the study period abroad is that the student has attended the same school grade s/he would have attended in Romania. In general, no additional exams/test are requested. The documents are received by the decentralised Unit of the Ministry of Education.
14	BULGARIA	yes (law issued in 2016), on the basis of a transcript of grades from the school abroad which shows that the student has passed the year in the hosting country. The documents are received by the Regional Inspectorate of Education. In general, Bulgarian students need to pass at least two exams (Bulgarian literature and Geography).
15	POLAND	yes, the law foresees that if a student going a year abroad has the permission from the school principal, the school needs to enroll the student again in the next year. However, the experience of pupil exchange organisations shows that it is better for the students to take a gap year. In fact students go on exchange during the 2nd year of secondary school and it is hard for them to catch up and pass the final exam foreseen in the last and 3rd year. Now the school reform foresees 4 years of secondary school and it might be easier for students to catch up before the final exam.
16	LITHUANIA	no, there is no law but schools can decide whether to admit a student in the next class, on the basis of a transcript of grades from the hosting school. Each school decides on its own, and case-by-case. The chances to get the year abroad validated are very low.
17	LATVIA	yes (law issued in 2015), on the basis of a transcript of grades from the school abroad. Students who went on exchange are automatically enrolled in the next grade and they have one year to complete all subjects that are foreseen in the Latvian curriculum and that they did not take abroad. The school principal decides what these subjects are, based on the transcript of grade received.
18	ESTONIA	no, students coming back from the year abroad can study over the summer and take the exams organised by the school, and therefore pass the year and be entitled to enter the next year. If they took some exams abroad, these might be recognised if matching with the Estonian curriculum. Only very few students take these exams, approx 2%.

19	FINLAND	no, students repeat the year. The schools recognise some specific subjects on the basis of a transcript of records.
20	SWEDEN	no, only the language of the hosting country can be recognised as a subject.
21	NORWAY	yes (law issued in 1999), The school decides whether to validate the year abroad, the conditions for all are 1) completing the school year and pass the exams and/or qualify to be moved up to the next level in the education system in the host country 2) the school year abroad is considered equivalent to or more extensive than year 12 in Norway 3) the education year abroad must have the "main emphasis" on the same range of subjects as the education program that the student would have followed in NOR. Local schools can have additional criteria. Moreover, all students who go on exchange with an accredited organisation and get their year abroad validated as year 12 (of a total of 13) of school get a scholarship of about NOK 50.000 (approx 5300 euros).
22	DENMARK	no, students go on exchange taking a gap year between elementary and secondary school, before entering the 10th grade. 50% of the students take a gap year.
23	GERMANY	yes in all 16 Federal states but only for the 10th grade (15-16 yo). In 5 federal states you can spend a semester abroad during 11th and 12th grade. For more information: http://aja-org.de/downloadcenter/
24	BELGIUM FRENCH SPEAKING COMMUNITY	yes (law issued in 2014), if the study period abroad takes place within the framework of the 'Programme Expedis'. Only during the 3rd, 4th, 5th year of secondary school, only during the Belgian academic year (not in summer), same year of studies, same type of school that the student would have attended in Belgium, 1400 minutes of school a week. Sending schools might not grant the permission to go on an exchange which foresees recognition because they believe it will be hard for students to catch up.
	BELGIUM FLEMISH COMMUNITY	no, students need to get the permission of their school to go abroad if they want to enroll back in the same school when they come back. Upon return, they can take the exam in August which allows them to enroll to the next school year.
25	NETHERLANDS	no, students repeat the year.
26	IRELAND	yes, only if students spend abroad their 4th year, which is a transition year for 15-16 year olds.
27	ICELAND	no, schools allow students to take separate exams to recognise separate subjects, mostly foreign languages. In some cases they might accept a transcript of records for some specific subject. Schools decide on a case to case basis.