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# Integration of Immigrant Students in Education

ERASMUS+ KA101 Teacher  
Training Course,

January, 2020  
Barcelona, SPAIN

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# Day 1 - Introduction

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- ❖ Getting to know each other
- ❖ Presentation of participants
- ❖ Why is 'the integration of students from migrant backgrounds into schools an important topic?
- ❖ What do we mean by 'students from migrant backgrounds'?
- ❖ Current state of immigrant students in Europe, facts and figures
- ❖ Education system in Spain and the immigrant students in Spain



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# Why is 'the integration of students from migrant backgrounds into schools an important topic?'

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- ❖ A student who is well-integrated into the education system both academically and socially has more chance of reaching their potential.
- ❖ Students from migrant backgrounds, however, face a number of challenges in this respect that can affect their learning and development



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# Why is 'the integration of students from migrant backgrounds into schools an important topic?'

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According to the academic research literature, three types of challenges can be distinguished:

- ❖ those related to the migration process (e.g. leaving the home country, having to acquire a new language, adapting to new rules and routines in schools, etc., and the impact of these acculturation stressors on migrant students' overall well-being) (Hamilton, 2013)



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# Why is 'the integration of students from migrant backgrounds into schools an important topic?

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- ❖ those related to the general socio-economic and political context (e.g. policies affecting the availability of resources to education systems and schools for promoting integration as well as policies promoting inclusion and equality more generally) (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014)



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# Why is ‘the integration of students from migrant backgrounds into schools an important topic?’

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❖ those related to student participation in education, including the limited scope of initial assessment, which does not always take account of both academic and non-academic aspects (i.e. social, emotional and health issues);

inappropriate grade placement;

language provision that is not adapted to the needs of students with a different mother tongue;

insufficient learning support and a lack of social and emotional support; teachers who are not trained and/or supported to deal with diversity in the classroom;

insufficient home-school cooperation; and a lack of or inflexibility in funding to provide adequate provision and support – to name but some (Reakes, 2007; Hamilton, 2013; Nilsson & Axelsson, 2013; Trasberg & Kond, 2017).



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# Why is 'the integration of students from migrant backgrounds into schools an important topic?

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- ❖ overall migrant students underperform and express a lower sense of well-being in school compared to native-born students in most European countries.
- ❖ As reported in the OECD's PISA survey of 2015, the proportion of low-achieving migrant students exceeds that of native-born students in most participating European countries, even when socio-economic status is controlled for (OECD, 2016).



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# Why is 'the integration of students from migrant backgrounds into schools an important topic?

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- ❖ Similarly, according to the latest Eurostat data, the rate of foreign-born students leaving education and training early is higher than the rate of the native-born population in almost all European countries for which data is available.
- ❖ Primary school students who do not speak the language of instruction at home report a lower sense of belonging and experience more bullying at school



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# Why is 'the integration of students from migrant backgrounds into schools an important topic?'

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- ❖ With increasing migration into and within an already quite culturally differentiated EU
- ❖ and with a high proportion of such immigrants from countries whose social and political cultures are significantly different and where levels of economic prosperity are much lower than most EU Member States,
- ❖ there is an urgent need for more knowledge sharing on the nature and effectiveness of cultural and social integration processes.



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# What do we mean by 'students from migrant backgrounds'?

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- ❖ Migrant students”, “migrant children” or “migrant young people” in this study. These terms are meant to be synonymous with “immigrant students” or “children/ students of migration background”, terms that we find in the literature and in political and public discourse
- ❖ Their reasons for having migrated (e.g. economic or political) may vary, as may their legal status – they may be citizens, residents, asylum seekers, refugees, unaccompanied minors or irregular migrants.



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# What do we mean by 'students from migrant backgrounds'?

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- ❖ “Migrant children” or “migrant young people” shall signify that immigration plays a key role in the biography of persons, whether they or their parents migrated.

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# What do we mean by ‘integrating migrant students in school’?

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- ❖ Means, creating a learning environment that is welcoming for students from diverse backgrounds and with different needs, and guaranteeing a safe space where all students feel secure, valued and able to learn.



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# Current situation in Europe

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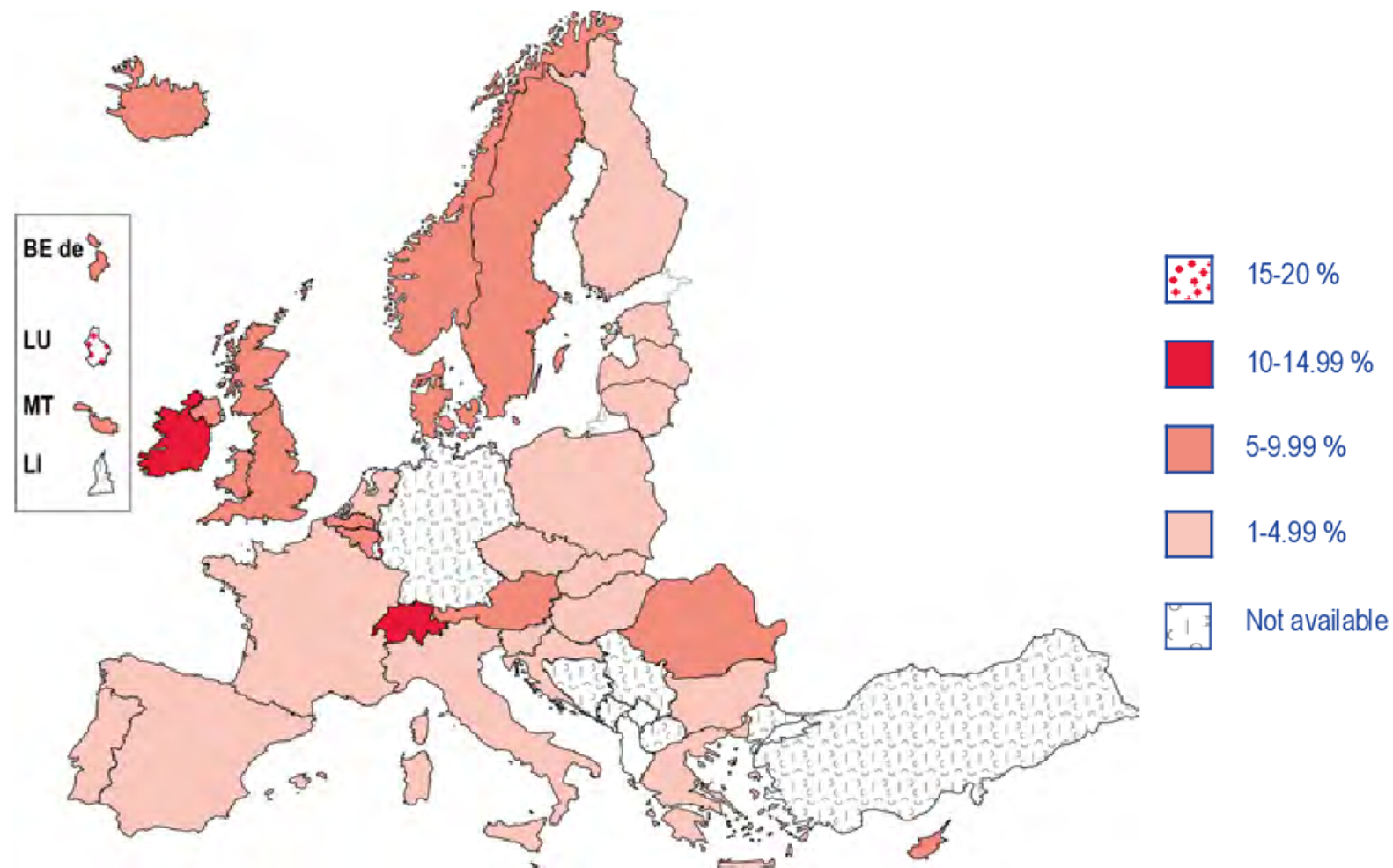
- ❖ Eurostat data on immigration rates in Europe shows that the numbers of people entering EU Member States fluctuates between the years and varies a great deal between countries.
- ❖ In the last decade, the highest numbers entered in 2007 (ca. 4 million), 2015 (ca. 4.7 million) and 2016 (ca. 4.3 million). These numbers include intra-European migration and migration from outside the EU



# Current situation in Europe

- ❖ Statistics focusing on a specific age group – young people under 15 years of age – indicate that in almost all countries with available data the group of foreign-born constitutes less than 10 % of this population

Figure 3: Proportion of foreign-born people under 15 years old among all young people in the same country in 2017

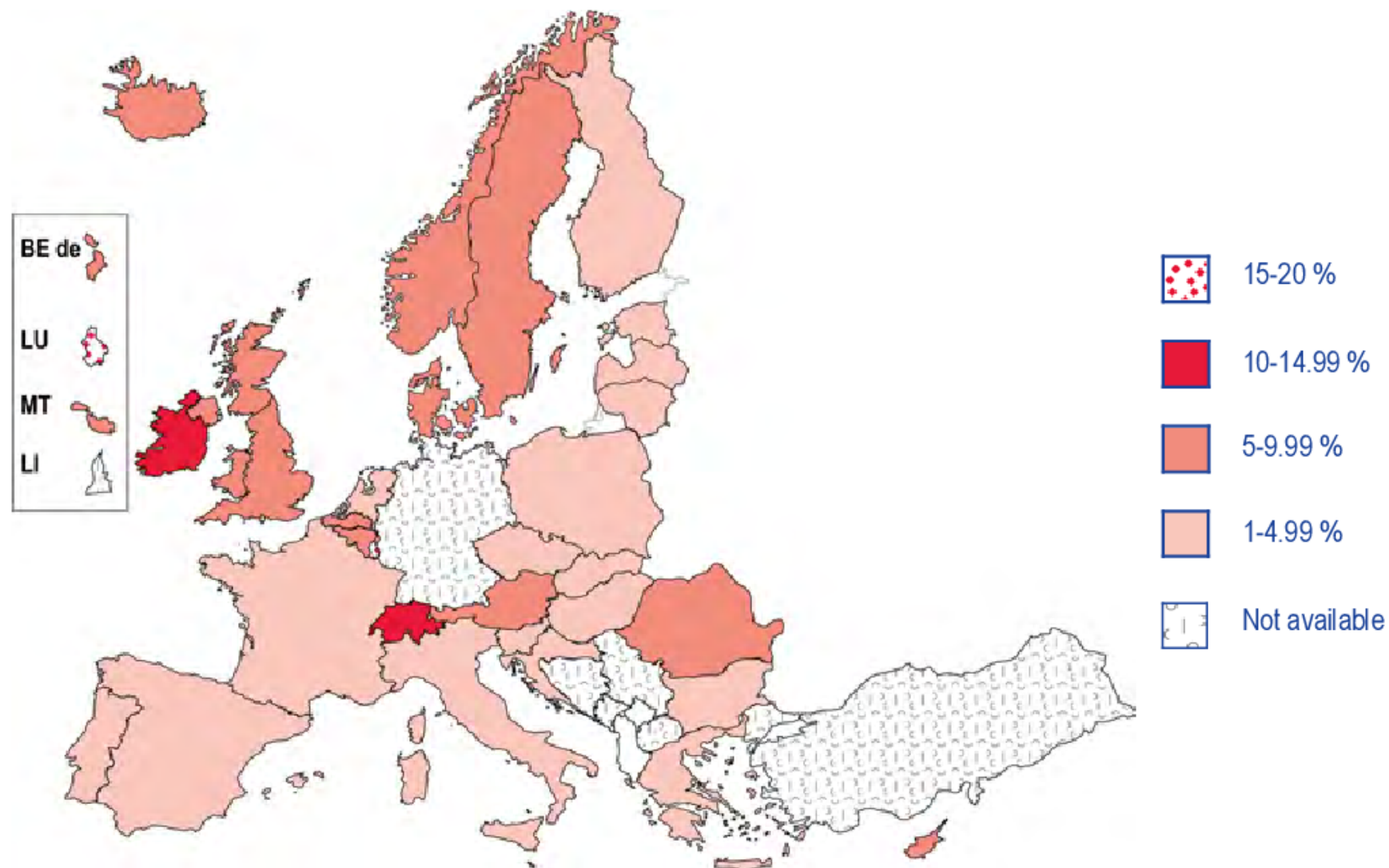


Source: Eurostat, Population on 1 January by age group, sex and country of birth [migr\_pop3ctb] (data extracted from Eurostat database)

**Explanatory note**



Figure 3: Proportion of foreign-born people under 15 years old among all young people in the same country in 2017



Source: Eurostat, Population on 1 January by age group, sex and country of birth [migr\_pop3ctb] (data extracted from Eurostat database)

**Explanatory note**

- ❖ The figure is below 5 % in 17 countries and between 5 % and 10 % in 10 countries. Luxembourg is a clear outlier, most likely due to the size of the country and also the substantial influx of highly skilled migrant workers from neighbouring countries.



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# Immigration in Spain

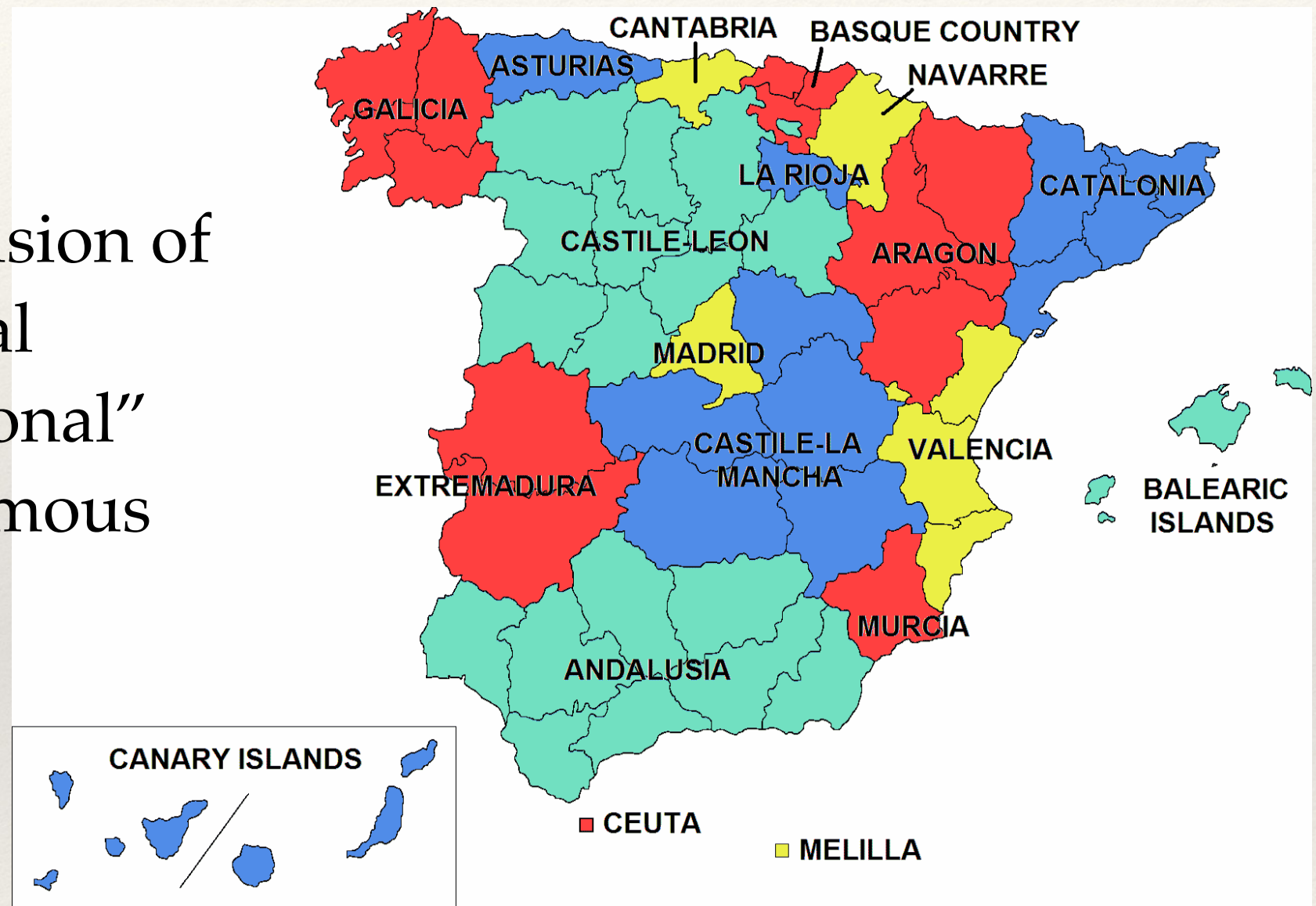
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- ❖ In 2018, around 6,000 underage migrants arrived in Spain, putting pressure on shelters and exposing the shortcomings of the region's support networks.
- ❖ The government has handed out €40 million to regions in Spain to compensate for the cost of caring for the nearly 12,500 migrant children estimated to be living in the country but has not announced any plans to improve their social integration.



# Education in Spain

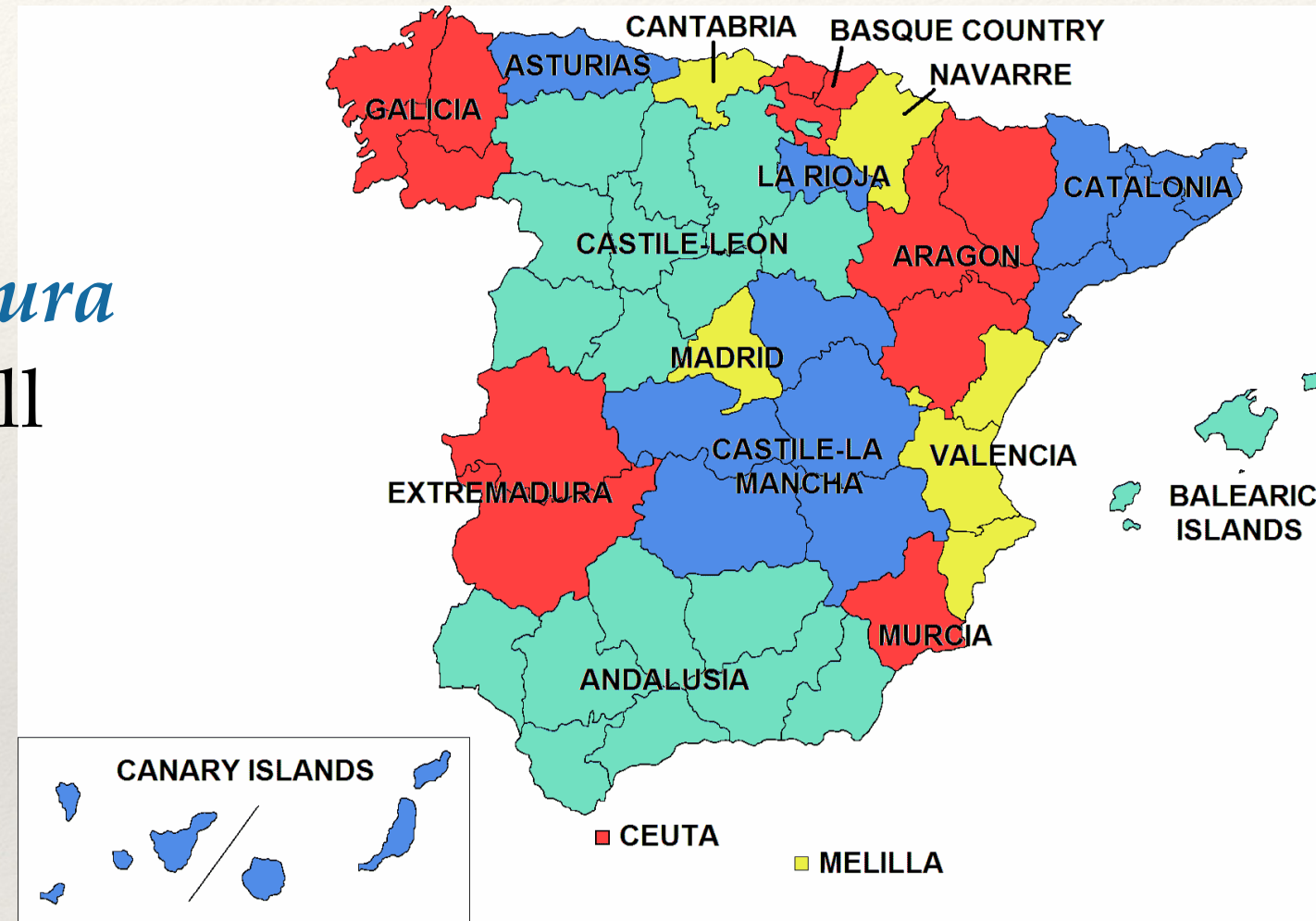
In Spain, there is a division of powers between central government and “regional” governments (Autonomous Communities)





# Education in Spain

Currently the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (*Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte or MECD*) has overall responsibility for education in Spain but the 17 autonomous regions make most of the decisions regarding their own education systems. ❖

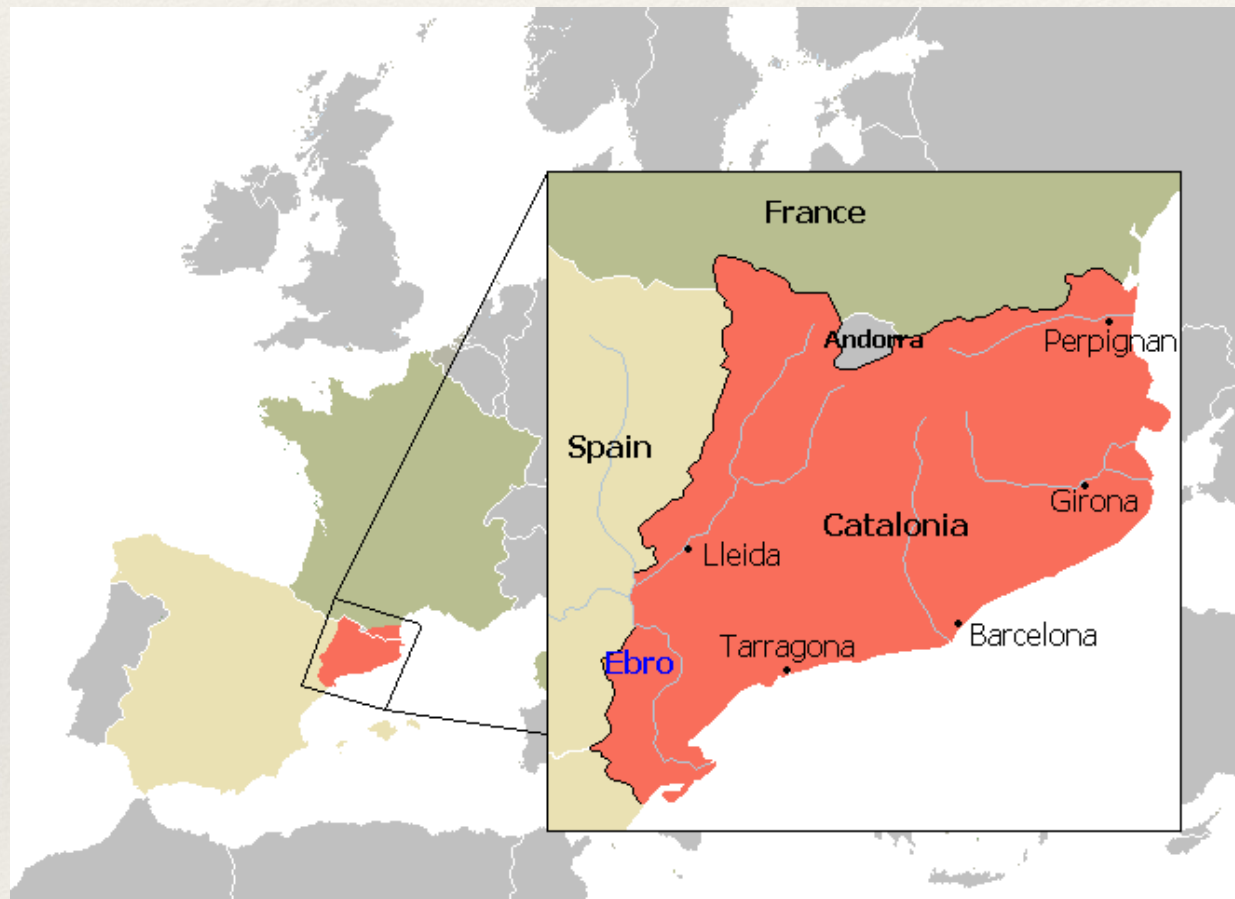




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# Education in Catalonia

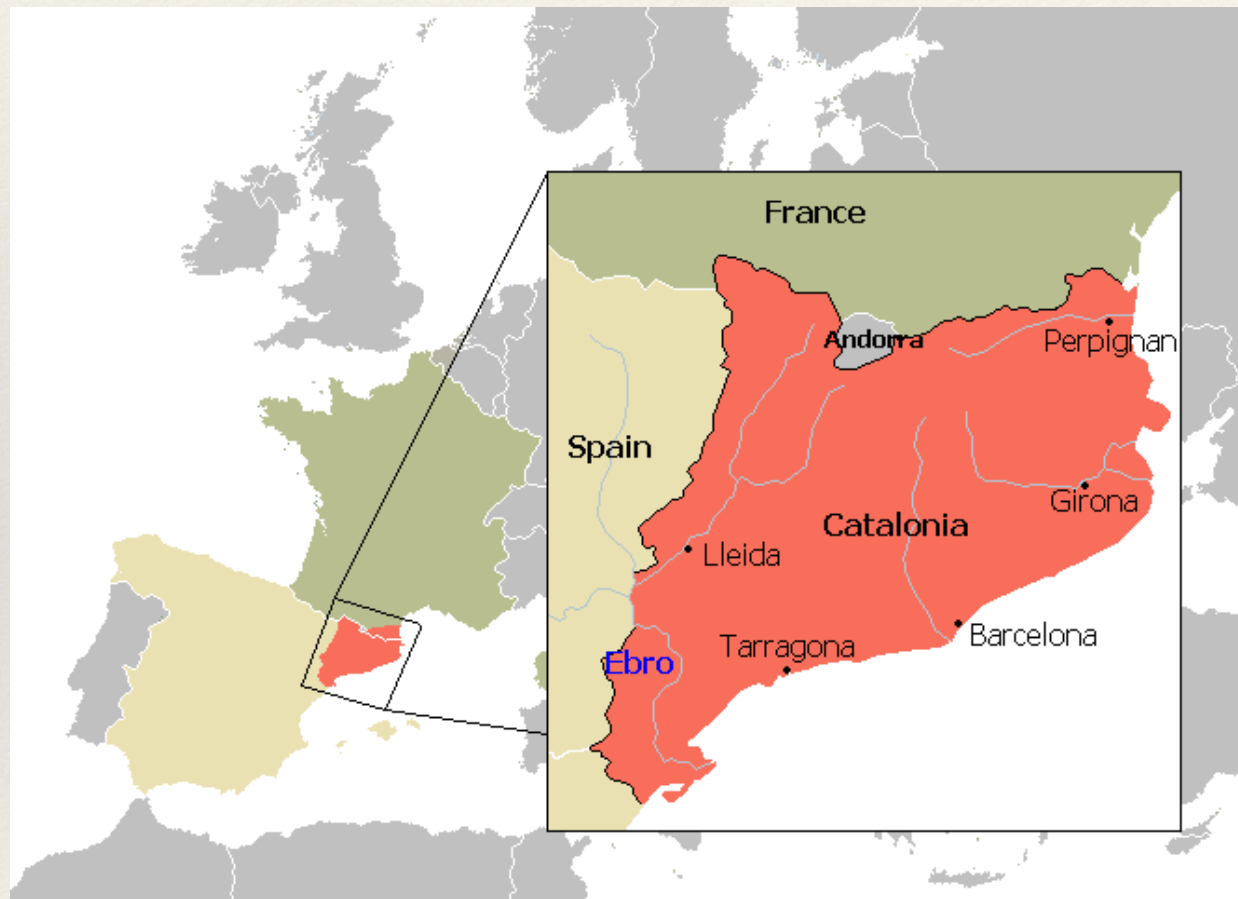
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While the education system is subject to Spanish legislation, the Catalan government has exclusive powers over education, as it does over other key areas, such as health, culture, territorial organization, and the budget



# Education in Catalonia



- ❖ All state education in Catalonia is in Catalan, with Spanish taught as a foreign language.
- ❖ It is a model that has come in for criticism from some elements in Spain, but the Catalan authorities insist that it ensures all children leave school bilingual.



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# Education in Spain

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There are three types of schools:

- ❖ **state schools**, which are publicly funded,
- ❖ **private schools**, which get no funding and are paid for by fees,
- ❖ **semi-private schools** (known as **concertada** schools), which get state grants and so are cheaper than private schools.



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# Immigration in Spain

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- ❖ The majority of children of immigrant origin in Spain attend public schools, although a significant minority attend subsidised private schools



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# Education in Catalonia

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- ❖ While education is not compulsory for children under six, over 90% of children attend school from the age of 3.
- ❖ In ESO (compulsory secondary education), children are taught in mixed ability classes and must repeat years if they haven't progressed enough.
- ❖ While the number varies from year to year as some schools close and others open, there are some 4,000 schools in Catalonia.



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# Immigrant Education in Spain

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- ❖ The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial survey of 15-year-old students that assesses the extent to which they have acquired the key knowledge and skills essential for full participation in society. The assessment focuses on proficiency in reading, mathematics, science and an innovative domain (in 2018, the innovative domain was global competence), and on students' well-being.
- ❖ Students in Spain scored below the OECD average in mathematics (481 points) and science (483), and their scores were most similar to those of students in Hungary and Lithuania



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# Immigrant Education in Spain

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- ❖ Specifically, in the latest edition of PISA in 2018, 32% of immigrant students could not surpass the lowest PISA level (level 1) whereas only 11% of native pupils were in that situation
- ❖ Difference in failure rate between immigrant and native children in Catalonia is significantly higher than in the rest of Spain and specifically than other Spanish regions with similar per capita income, social development level and urban population ratio like Madrid.



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# Immigrant Education in Spain

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- ❖ PISA results indicate that Catalonia is the autonomous community of Spain where immigrant students feel less integrated in their school. 26% of immigrant children in Catalonia recognize that they do not feel integrated, a percentage that almost doubles that of immigrants pupils in other regions.



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# Immigrant Education in Spain

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- ❖ The poor performance of immigrant students (most of them Spanish-speaking) in Catalonia seems related to the obligatory use of Catalan as the sole medium of instruction.



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# Indicators of Integration in Catalonia

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- ❖ Integration is the concept used to describe the social, political, cultural and economic processes that result from immigrants arriving in a new society
- ❖ While Spain has not been one of the countries receiving the highest number of newcomers during the most recent spike in arrivals to Europe, the country, and notably the city of Barcelona, experienced for the last fifteen years a sharp increase in migrant arrivals, which required a rapid adaptation from the different levels of government



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# Indicators of Integration in Catalonia

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- ❖ Integration is also understood to be a two-way process affecting both people with migration backgrounds and society as a whole, and hence integration is not only about a specific population but also about the response and inclusiveness of the host society