Definition of the target group(s)

Depending on the needs identified, the education system provides children and young people with various forms of support during the education process. Support is aimed at:

- offering children and young people best possible conditions for development;
- reducing the existing disharmonies and developmental disorders;
- ensuring that they acquire knowledge and skills in a way adapted to their abilities and strengths;
- developing their interests and talents;
- assisting them in overcoming difficulties, including those resulting from a difficult financial or life situation.

Such measures contribute to reducing drop-out rates.

In addition to support offered to children and young people with special educational needs, there are specific support measures for:

- students who have reached the age of 15 and are not considered capable of completing primary education in accordance with normal arrangements;
- children and young people from ethnic and national minority backgrounds;
- children and young people who are non-Polish or Polish nationals, are of full-time or part-time compulsory school age and do not speak Polish or whose command of Polish is not sufficient to follow mainstream classes;
- children and young people in a difficult financial situation;
- children and young people with high learning and sporting achievements.

Specific support measures

Statutes of a nursery school or school

Detailed arrangements for supporting children and young people and their parents are laid down in the statutes of each institution within the school education system or – for an alternative preschool education setting – in organisational regulations adopted by its managing body.

In particular, the statutes of a school set out:

- aims and tasks of the school based on the national legislation, and methods of performing such tasks, including those related to psychological and educational support, care for disabled pupils/students, activities aimed at preserving their national, ethnic, linguistic and religious
identity, with consideration given to safety regulations and the principles of promoting and protecting health;

- organisational arrangements for work in the school, including: teaching and learning in classes; teaching a national / ethnic minority language or the regional language, if such classes exist or are taught in the school; organisational arrangements for early development support if provided; and rehabilitation-and-education classes / activities if conducted in the school;

- the scope of responsibilities assigned to teachers (including class tutors and the teacher-librarian, and other school staff), including those related to ensuring safety for pupils/students during classes/activities organised by the school; and ways of performing such responsibilities which should be adapted to the age and needs of pupils/students and the conditions in the school;

- detailed arrangements for internal assessment of pupils/students within the school;

- rights and duties of pupils/students, including cases where they may be struck off the register of pupils/students; and the complaint procedure for cases of infringement of their rights;

- types of awards and conditions for giving them to pupils/students, and the procedure for raising objections to the awards given;

- types of penalties imposed on pupils/students, and the procedure for appeals against such decisions;

- cases in which the head of the primary school may submit a request to the head of the regional education authorities to transfer a pupil/student to another school;

- organisational arrangements for voluntary activities;

- types of care and support, including financial support, provided to pupils/students who need it due to developmental or family problems or unexpected life circumstances.

The statutes of a school for children and young people also lay down arrangements for:

- additional classes for pupils/students, depending on their developmental needs;

- collaboration with counselling and guidance centres and other institutions working for families, children and young people;

- collaboration between schools and parents in the area of teaching/learning, education and problem prevention;

- collaboration with associations or other organisations as regards innovative activities;

Aims and tasks of the school set out in its statutes take into consideration its educational and problem prevention programme.

The statutes of a nursery school specify detailed responsibilities of teachers related to the following:

- aims and tasks of the nursery school based on the national legislation, including those related to psychological and educational support, care for disabled children, activities aimed at preserving their national, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity, with consideration given to safety regulations and the principles of promoting and protecting health;

- ways in which the nursery school’s tasks are performed, taking into consideration support for individual development of children and support for the family in raising the child and preparing him/her for school education; and, in the case of disabled children, with special regard to the type of disability;

- forms of collaboration with parents and the frequency of contacts with parents;

- the responsibilities of teachers and other staff, including those related to:
  - ensuring safety for children during classes/activities organised by the nursery school;
  - collaborating with parents in matters concerning education, while taking into consideration parents’ right to be familiar with the responsibilities stemming from the preschool education curriculum implemented in a given class and to receive information
concerning their child, his/her behaviour and development;
- planning and conducting teaching and educational work, and assuring its quality;
- conducting pedagogical observation in order to identify and address children’s developmental needs, and keeping records of such observation;
- collaborating with specialists providing psychological and educational support, healthcare and other types of care.

**Organisational arrangements for alternative pre-school education settings**

The body managing an alternative preschool education setting determines the aims and tasks of a given setting, and the method of their implementation, including:

- supporting children’s individual development;
- supporting families in raising their children and preparing them for school education;
- in the case of disabled children: with special regard to the type and degree of disability.

The responsibilities of teachers working in an alternative preschool education setting include, for example:

- conducting pedagogical observation in order to identify children’s developmental needs and abilities;
- assessing children’s readiness for school;
- cooperating with specialists providing psychological and educational support or healthcare.

Schools, except for schools for adults, implement education-and-problem prevention programmes which cover:

- educational contents and measures targeted at pupils/students;
- problem-prevention / preventive contents and measures targeted at pupils/students, teachers and parents.

Education-and-problem prevention programmes should also be developed and implemented by:

- education-and-care institutions, including youth hostels at schools, which enable learners to develop their interests and abilities and participate in various leisure and free time activities;
- continuing education centres, practical training centres and further and in-service training centres where learners can acquire and develop knowledge and skills, and acquire and upgrade vocational qualifications;
- arts institutions: arts centres where participants can develop artistic interests and talents;
- special centres: youth education centres; youth social therapy centres; special school-and-education centres; special educational centres for children and young people who require special organisation of the learning process and teaching and learning methods; and rehabilitation-and-education centres;
- institutions providing care and education to pupils/students during a period of education away from the place of permanent residence.

Educational and problem-prevention tasks of schools, which should be integrated into preschool education / school curricula and classes / lessons with class tutors, are determined on the basis of the core curricula for general education.

Education-and-problem prevention programmes are adopted by the parents’ council in consultation with the teaching council of a given school.
Preparation / training for employment

Primary schools may establish classes preparing / training for employment which are intended for pupils who:

- have reached the age of 15;
- are not considered capable of completing primary education in accordance with normal arrangements; and
- have been promoted to grade VII of the primary school or have not been promoted to grade VIII of the primary school.

The head of a primary school admits a pupil to a class preparing for employment:

- with his/her parents’ consent;
- taking into consideration an opinion/statement given by a medical doctor;
- taking into consideration an opinion/statement given by a counselling and guidance centre, including a specialised centre, which recommends that the pupil should attend a class preparing for employment.

A class preparing for employment follows:

- a general education curriculum based on the core curriculum for general education which is adapted to the needs and abilities of pupils;
- a programme preparing for employment, developed by the teacher conducting classes which enable pupils to achieve selected learning outcomes as defined in the core curriculum for the training for a given occupation.

The training which prepares for employment may be provided:

- in a primary school;
- outside of the school, based on an agreement between the head of the primary school and, in particular, a vocational school, a continuing education centre, a practical training centre, a further and in-service training centre or employer.

National and ethnic minorities

The Republic of Poland guarantees the freedom to preserve and develop their own language, customs and traditions and develop their own culture for Polish citizens who are members of national and ethnic minorities.

Poland recognises the following minorities as national minorities:

- Byelorussian
- Czech
- Lithuanian
- German
- Armenian
- Russian
- Slovak
- Ukrainian
- Jewish.

The following minorities are recognised as ethnic minorities:
Karaim
Lemko
Roma
Tatar.

The Kashubian language is considered a regional language.

(Act of 6 January 2005 on the National and Ethnic Minorities and on the Regional Language; Journal of Law 2017, item 823)

The school education system enables children and young people from national and ethnic minorities to preserve their sense of national, ethnic, language and religious identity, in particular, to learn their mother tongue, history and culture.

The decision for the child to attend such classes is taken by his/her parents. At parents’ written and voluntary request, (nursery) schools or other institutions provide children with the opportunity to learn their mother tongue or learn in their mother tongue, and to take additional classes/courses maintaining their national or ethnic identity.

Such a request is submitted:

- to the head of the (nursery) school;
- by 20 September (the head may accept the request after the deadline in justified cases, and in particular when places are still available in the (nursery) school;
- in a paper version;
- for the entire period of preschool education in a given nursery school or a given preschool class in a primary school, or the entire period of education in a given school.

Where such a request has been submitted by parents:

- minority or regional language classes become compulsory for the pupil/student, which means that marks for the classes are used to calculate the average mark and have impact on promotion to the next grade;
- the subject/course in minority history and culture is regarded as an additional one, which means that marks for the classes are used to calculate the average mark but do not have impact on promotion to the next grade.

Pupils’-students’ parents or adult students may submit a statement that they withdraw from minority or regional language classes / courses or classes / courses in the history and culture of the minority / regional-language community. Such a statement is submitted to the head of the (nursery) school:

- not later than by 29 September of the school year in which the pupil/student will withdraw from the classes / course;
- in a paper version.

Where such a statement is submitted, the pupil/student will no longer attend minority or regional language classes / courses and classes / courses in the history and culture of the minority / regional-language community.

Depending on the number of applications submitted, minority / regional language / minority history and culture courses are organised in:

- grades;
• classes;
• groups composed of pupils/students of different grades;
• groups composed of pupils/students of different classes.

Classes taking a minority / regional language course or a course delivered in a minority / regional language are established when at least the following numbers of applications have been submitted:

• at least 14 pupils in a nursery school or a preschool class in the primary school;
• at least 7 pupils/students at the level of a given grade in schools.

Where local communities are small and dispersed, the body managing a given (nursery) school may provide a minority / regional language course for pupils/students from different schools in inter-school teams. This option is also available to children at the preschool education age.

Such teams may be composed of 3 to 16 children.

A minority language or the regional language may be:

• the **language of instruction**, except for Polish language teaching at the early school education stage, and except for the Polish language and contents related to Poland taught as part of the History and Geography subjects at further stages of education;
• a **second language of instruction**: at least four compulsory subjects at education stages II, III and IV are taught in two languages (the minority / regional language and Polish), except for Polish language classes, History classes concerning the history of Poland and Geography classes concerning the geography of Poland;
• an **additional subject** for a pupil/student whose language of instruction is Polish.

In nursery schools and schools, a minority language or the regional language may be taught:

• **as an additional language course/subject**;
• **in a bilingual form**: the Polish language, and a minority language or the regional language;
• **through classes conducted in a minority language or the regional language**.

**Nursery schools:**

• where a minority language / the regional language is taught as an additional course, there are 6 lessons per week;
• where preschool education classes are conducted in a minority language or the regional language, 8 lessons per week should also be conducted in the Polish language.

**Schools:**

• where a minority language or the regional language is taught as part of bilingual education or where this language is the language of instruction, pupils/students follow in the Polish language the part of the core curriculum for general education which covers Polish language education (grades I to III of the primary school) or the Polish language as a subject; the part of History classes which cover the history of Poland; and the part of Geography classes which cover the geography of Poland (grades IV to VIII of the primary school and post-primary schools);
• where a minority language or the regional language is taught as part of bilingual education, at least 4 compulsory classes / subjects at a given education stage are conducted in two languages, except the Polish language, the part of History classes covering the history of Poland and the part of Geography classes covering the geography of Poland (this does not apply to pupils in grades I to III of the primary school);
4-year general secondary schools and 5-year technical secondary schools may teach a minority language or the regional language at the extended level. In such cases, in addition to the number of hours allocated to teaching the language at the basic level, 8 hours per week should be allocated to such classes;

the number of hours for minority or regional language classes and classes in pupils’/students’ history and culture is set by the school head in the weekly timetable.

The weekly number of hours for minority or regional language classes varies depending on the type of school and the school grade, and on the form of language learning:

- **teaching in a minority language or the regional language:**
  - 8-year primary school: 4 or 5 hours, depending on the grade:
    - 4 hours in grades I, IV, V and VII;
    - 5 hours in grades II, III and VI;
  - 4-year general secondary school (language learning at the basic level): 4 or 5 hours, depending on the grade:
    - 4 hours in grades I, III and IV;
    - 5 hours in grade II;
  - 5-year technical secondary school (language learning at the basic level): 3 or 4 hours, depending on the grade:
    - 3 hours in grades I, IV and V;
    - 4 hours in grades II and III;
  - 3-year stage I sectoral vocational school and 2-year stage II sectoral vocational school: 2 hours in all grades;

- **teaching in two languages:** the Polish language and a minority language or the regional language (bilingual education);
  - 8-year primary school: 4 to 6 hours, depending on the grade:
    - 4 hours in grade I;
    - 5 hours in grades II, III, VI and VII;
    - 6 hours in grades IV, V and VIII;
  - 4-year general secondary school (language learning at the basic level): 4 or 5 hours, depending on the grade:
    - 4 hours in grades I, II and IV;
    - 5 hours in grade III;
  - 5-year technical secondary school (language learning at the basic level): 3 or 4 hours, depending on the grade:
    - 3 hours in grades I, IV and V;
    - 4 hours in grades II and III;
  - 3-year stage I sectoral vocational school and 2-year stage II sectoral vocational school: 2 hours in each grade;

- **teaching a minority language or the regional language as an additional course:** 3 hours in each type of school and each grade.

The number of hours for a course/classes in the history and culture of a minority / regional-language community per year is:

- 25 hours in grades V and VI of the primary school;
- 30 hours in grades II and III of the 4-year general secondary school (language learning at the basic level);
- 20 hours in grades II and III of the 5-year technical secondary school (language learning at the basic level);
• 15 hours in grades I and II of the stage I sectoral vocational school;
• 10 hours in grade I of the stage II sectoral vocational school.

Teaching a minority language / the regional language, and history, culture and geography of the country that a national minority identifies with, is based on curricula approved for use at school by the school head and on textbooks approved for use at school by the Minister of National Education.

Public schools may offer classes in the geography of the country that the national minority identifies with to national minority pupils/students.

If hours are allocated by the body managing a given school, such classes are taught:

• for up to 30 hours at education stage II (grades IV to VI of the primary school);
• for up to 15 hours in the general secondary school, technical secondary school and stage I sectoral vocational school.

Public nursery schools, schools and other public institutions may conduct:

• arts classes / artistic activities, and
• other classes / activities

for pupils/students from national and ethnic minorities and the community speaking the regional language.

Such classes are conducted:

• at the request of the head of a given (nursery) school/institution;
• if the body managing a given (nursery) school/institution allocates hours to such classes/activities.

Non-Polish nationals who should participate in full-time compulsory education may be offered classes/courses in the language and culture of their country of origin.

Such classes/courses are organised in a school:

• by the diplomatic mission or a consulate of the country of origin which is located in Poland or a cultural/educational association for a given nationality;
• in collaboration with the head of the school and with the consent of the body managing the school;
• with premises and educational resources provided by the school free of charge.

(Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 18 August 2017 on the conditions and arrangements for public nursery schools, schools and other public institutions to perform tasks aimed at preserving a sense of national, ethnic and linguistic identity of pupils/students from national and ethnic minorities and the community speaking the regional language; Journal of Law, item 1627).

**Support for children and young people of Roma origin**

Public nursery schools and schools:

• take, where necessary, additional measures to preserve and develop the ethnic identity of children and young people of Roma origin, and support their education, in particular, by providing remedial classes;
• may employ **Roma education assistants** as teaching assistants who:
  ○ assist children and young people of Roma origin in their interactions with the (nursery) school environment; and
  ○ collaborate with their parents and (nursery) schools.

(Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 18 August 2017 on the conditions and arrangements for public nursery schools, schools and other public institutions to perform tasks aimed at preserving a sense of national, ethnic and linguistic identity of pupils/students from national and ethnic minorities and the community speaking the regional language; Journal of Law, item 1627).

**Non-Polish nationals, and Polish nationals who have received education abroad**

Non-Polish nationals:

• are provided with education and care under the same conditions as Polish nationals:
  ○ in public nursery schools and other preschool education settings, and in non-public nursery schools which comply with the requirements specified in Article 90 (1b) of the School Education Act and non-public preschool education settings which comply with the requirements specified in Article 90 (1c) of the School Education Act;
  ○ if they are required to participate in full-time compulsory education: in public primary schools, arts schools and educational institutions, including arts institutions;
  ○ if they are required to participate in part-time compulsory education: in public post-primary schools until they reach the age of 18 or until completion of education in a post-primary school;

• have the right to support provided by a person speaking the language of their country of origin, employed by the school head as a teaching assistant:
  ○ such support is provided for up to 12 months.

Non-Polish nationals who are not listed above may attend public schools for adults, public post-secondary schools, public art schools, other public educational institutions and public colleges of social work and take qualification courses as part of continuing education:

• as holders of a scholarship awarded by the minister responsible for school education;
• as holders of a scholarship awarded by the body managing a school or educational institution, or by the head of a school or institution;
• on a fee-paying basis.

The school education system provides the following types of support to persons who are required to participate in full-time or part-time compulsory education and who have no knowledge or insufficient knowledge of the Polish language to follow regular classes / a regular programme:

• **An additional and free course in the Polish language**
  ○ It is organised by the body managing a given school.
  ○ Classes are conducted on an individual basis or in a group.
  ○ The number of class hours should be adjusted to the needs of pupils/students so that they can become sufficiently fluent in the Polish language to attend regular compulsory classes, but it may not be lower than 2 class / teaching hours (45 minutes each) per week.
  ○ The weekly timetable and the number of hours for additional Polish language classes are determined by the head of the school providing such classes, in agreement with the body managing the school.

• **Additional remedial classes for subjects included in the curriculum**
The need for a pupil/student to take remedial classes to fill in gaps in knowledge resulting from curricular differences is identified by the teacher of a given school subject. Remedial classes are conducted on an individual basis or in a group. Classes are conducted as additional lessons in a given school subject, with 1 class/teaching hour (45 minutes) per week, for a period of up to 12 months. The weekly timetable of additional remedial classes is established by the school head, in agreement with the body managing the school. Classes are organised by the body managing the school.

- **Preparatory class**
  - A preparatory class is intended for pupils/students for whom the education process should be adapted to their educational needs and abilities, and organisational arrangements should be adjusted to increase the effectiveness of the learning process.
  - Such a class is established in the school where pupils/students follow the core curriculum for general education.
  - The body managing a given school is responsible for establishing such a class.

Depending on their needs, non-Polish nationals and Polish nationals who have attended a school within the school education system abroad may:

- follow a programme where the education process is adapted to their educational needs;
- take an additional Polish language course;
- take additional remedial classes covering the subjects taught;
- take a course in the language and culture of their country of origin.

(Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 23 August 2017 on the education of non-Polish nationals and Polish nationals who have attended schools within school education systems in other countries (Journal of Law, item 1655)

**Preparatory class**

The body managing a public school may establish a preparatory class for pupils/students coming from other countries who are required to participate in full-time compulsory education and:

- have no knowledge or insufficient knowledge of the Polish language to follow a regular education programme;
- require adjusting the education process to their educational needs;
- require adjusting organisational arrangements to increase the effectiveness of the learning process.

Preparatory classes are not established in public art schools, public special schools, public sport schools, public schools of sport championship or public schools for adults.

Teaching in a preparatory class is intended for pupils/students aged:

- 7 to 10 years: covering grades I to III of the primary school;
- 11 to 13 years: covering grades IV to VI of the primary school;
- 14 to 16 years: covering grades I to III of the lower secondary school;
- 17 and 18 years: covering grades I to III of the general upper secondary school or basic vocational school, or grades I to IV of the technical upper secondary school, respectively.

Preparatory classes may take pupils/students who:

- have adaptation difficulties related to cultural differences or a change of the learning
environment;
• have language communication problems resulting, in particular, from crisis or traumatic situations, including armed conflicts, natural disasters or other natural or man-made humanitarian disasters.

Classes in a preparatory class are conducted by teachers responsible for specific subjects/types of classes. Teachers may be supported by a person speaking the language of the pupil’s/student’s country of origin, employed as a teaching assistant by the school head.

Teaching in a preparatory class is based on the curricula implemented in a given school, with methods and forms adapted to pupils’/students’ individual developmental and educational needs and psychological and physical abilities.

The following minimum weekly number of hours is allocated in the school timetable to compulsory classes in a preparatory class:

• 20 hours in grades I to III of the primary school;
• 23 hours in grades IV to VI of the primary school;
• 25 hours in the lower secondary school;
• 26 hours in schools above the lower secondary level.

The weekly number of hours includes 3 hours per week for the teaching of the Polish language according to a syllabus based on an outline programme for Polish language courses for foreigners.

Local government units are entitled to receive grants as part of the school education section of the general subsidy to finance tasks related to the education of pupils/students, regardless of their citizenship.

Like Polish nationals, non-Polish pupils/students take external examinations. Where their command of Polish and knowledge of Polish culture and traditions are insufficient and they have attended a Polish school for a short time, they may use adapted examination sheets, suitable teaching materials (e.g. bilingual dictionaries) and have the duration of the exam extended.

A preparatory class may take pupils/students from another school:

• at their parents’ request;
• with the consent of the body managing the school where such a class is established, and within the limits of the funding available;
• while taking into consideration the regulations whereby the commune (gmina; the lowest local government level) is required to provide school transport to pupils if the distance between their home and the school exceeds 3 or 4 kilometres in the case of pupils in grades I to IV or pupils in grades V to VIII of the primary school respectively (Article 39 (2 to 4) of the Law on School Education).

The period of attending a preparatory class:

• Pupils/students attend such a class until the end of classes in the school year in which they were assigned to the class.
• Depending on the progress that pupils/students have made in learning and their educational needs, the period may be shortened or extended for up to one school year.
• A decision to shorten or extend the period is taken by the school’s teaching council at the request of teachers, the pedagogue or psychologist working with the pupil/student concerned.
Organisation of a preparatory class:

- Pupils/students are assigned to a preparatory class by a team of 2 teachers, a pedagogue and a psychologist, appointed by the head of a given school.
- A preparatory class may have up to 15 pupils/students.
- Teaching is based on the school’s curricula, with implementation methods and forms adapted to pupils'/students' individual developmental and educational needs and psychological and physical abilities.
- Classes are taught by teachers of individual subjects who may be supported by a person speaking the language of the pupils'/students’ country of origin, employed as a teaching assistant.
- It is possible to have a mixed class composed of pupils/students from different grades:
  - grades I to III of the primary school;
  - grades IV to VI of the primary school;
  - grades VII and VIII of the primary school;
  - grades I and II of the general secondary school, and grades I to III of the technical secondary school and the stage I sectoral vocational school;
  - grades III and IV of the general secondary school and grades III to V of the technical secondary school.
- A preparatory class may also be established during a school year.

Compulsory classes/subjects in a preparatory class are allocated at least 20 to 26 hours per week, depending on the type of school and the grade:

- in the primary school:
  - at least 20 hours per week in grades I to III;
  - at least 23 hours per week in grades IV to VI;
  - at least 25 hours per week in grades VII and VIII;
- in a post-primary school: at least 26 hours per week.

The weekly number of hours for a preparatory class includes at least 3 hours per week for teaching the Polish language according to a syllabus based on an outline programme for Polish language courses for foreigners.

(Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 18 February 2011 on the outline programme for Polish language courses for foreigners; Journal of Law No. 61, item 306).

Preparatory classes are not established in the following types of schools:

- arts schools;
- special schools;
- sports schools;
- sport championship schools;
- schools for adults.

Schools may offer courses in the language and culture of the country of origin to non-Polish nationals who should participate in full-time compulsory education:

- A course is organised by the diplomatic mission or consulate of the country of origin located in Poland or a cultural/educational association for a given nationality.
- A course is organised in collaboration with the head of a given school and with the consent of the body managing the school.
• A course is organised if at least 7 pupils/students apply to take it.
• The total number of hours may not be higher than 5 class/teaching hours (45 minutes each) per week.
• The school head agrees with the diplomatic mission, consulate or association concerned the days of the week and the time when a course in the language and culture of the country of origin may be taught.
• The school provides premises and educational resources free of charge.

(Article 165 of the Act of 14 December 2016, The Law on School Education; Journal of Law, items 59 and 949)

(Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 23 August 2017 on education provided to non-Polish nationals and to Polish nationals who have attended a school within the school education systems in other countries; Journal of Law, item 1655)

**Textbooks**

Textbooks and supplementary books used in the education of pupils/students to the extent necessary to preserve their sense of national, ethnic or language identity may be co-funded from the part of the state budget managed by the minister responsible for school education.

The objectives of teaching minority languages and the regional language, curricular contents and the requirements to be taken into consideration by teachers developing a curriculum and by the authors of textbooks are set out in the regulations on the core curriculum.

The core curriculum defines general requirements related to the objectives of education and detailed requirements concerning ethnic / minority / regional language teaching contents at the stage of preschool education and all other stages of education.

There is no core curriculum for subjects such as minority history and culture and the geography of the country that a national minority identifies with. However, the authors of textbooks for these subjects are obliged to take account of recommendations issued by bilateral textbook commissions and other textbook commissions and teams acting on the basis of international agreements on cooperation in education or agreements between UNESCO national committees.

Where necessary, (nursery) schools take additional measures to preserve and develop the ethnic identity of children and young people of Roma origin and support their education. In particular, these include:

• remedial classes;
• employing support teachers trained to work with children in multicultural environments;
• employing Roma education assistants.

Roma education assistants are employed as teaching assistants. They assist children and young people of Roma origin in contacts with the (nursery) school environment and collaborate with their parents and (nursery) schools.

Poland has undertaken systemic measures aimed at Roma integration. They are coordinated by the minister responsible for religious denominations, ethnic and national minorities and involve other ministries, regional and local government authorities and non-governmental organisations representing the Roma community in particular.

In 2004, Poland launched a government programme “The Programme for the Roma Community in
Poland for 2004-2013 [1]. It is now carried out as “The governmental programme for Roma community integration in Poland for 2014-2020 [2]”.

Educational activities undertaken as part of government programmes aim at providing equal educational opportunities to Roma pupils; assisting the youngest Roma children in overcoming barriers in education and adaptation; reducing the proportion of pupils who are not in compulsory education; and raising Roma parents’ awareness of the importance of education for the future of their children.

Local government units as the bodies managing schools attended by Roma children, and Roma associations and organisations or those acting for Roma communities across Poland apply for grants for the implementation of tasks under the government programmes.

Local government units managing schools which carry out tasks aimed at the preservation of the national, ethnic and language identity of ethnic / national minority pupils and communities speaking the regional language are provided with additional resources for the implementation of such tasks as part of the general subsidy for school education.

**Financial support**

The school education system provides financial support to pupils/students.

Support can be of maintenance- or of incentive-type.

Maintenance-type support includes:

- school grants, and
- school allowances.

Incentive-type support includes:

- scholarships for learning or sporting achievements,
- the Prime Minister’s scholarships,
- scholarships of the minister responsible for school education, and
- scholarships of the minister responsible for culture and national heritage.

Pupils/students may be granted both types of financial support at the same time.

**School grants** may be awarded to pupils/students in a difficult financial situation resulting from low per-capita income in the family, in particular when the family is faced with the following problems:

- unemployment;
- disability;
- a severe or long-lasting illness;
- a large number of children;
- parents' inability to provide education and care;
- alcoholism or drug addiction;
- single parenthood; or
- unforeseen life circumstances.

School grants may be awarded in the form of:

- fully or partly covered costs of participation in classes, including remedial classes, which extend
beyond classes provided by schools as part of their timetables, and costs of participation in classes organised outside the school;
• in-kind support for education-related expenses, in particular for the purchase of textbooks.

**School allowances** may be granted to pupils/students who are temporarily in a difficult financial situation due to an event beyond their control. School allowances are granted as cash benefits to cover education-related expenses or as education-related support in kind. The rules for granting maintenance-type benefits to pupils/students living in the jurisdiction of a commune (gmina) are adopted by the commune council in line with the objectives of maintenance-type financial support.

Pupils/students with high learning or sporting achievements may be awarded a scholarship for learning or sporting achievements.

Pupils/students in schools for youth leading to the maturity certificate may be granted the **Prime Minister’s scholarship**. It is awarded to pupils/students who have been promoted to a higher grade with distinction, achieving the highest average mark in their school, or who have demonstrated special talents in at least one area of knowledge, achieving the highest results in this area and at least good results in other areas. The scholarship is awarded by the Prime Minister to one pupil/student per school for a period between September and June in a given school year.

The **scholarship of the minister responsible for school education** may be granted to a student in a public school for youth or a non-public school with the status of public school for youth who has demonstrated outstanding learning achievements. In particular, it may be granted to:

• the winner of an international competition, or the winner or a finalist in a national-level subject competition;
• the winner of a research competition organised by a research institution or association;
• an upper secondary school student with highest learning achievements who follows an individualised learning programme or learning path;
• a school student taking classes at a higher education institution on the basis of academic regulations concerning the enrolment of particularly gifted school students on higher education programmes;
• a pupil/student with high achievements in sporting competitions at national or international level.

The scholarship of the minister responsible for culture and national heritage may be awarded to a student in an arts school training for artistic occupations who:

• has achieved a very high average mark in art subjects during a term (semester);
• is the winner of an international or national arts competition.

Pupils/students who are not Polish nationals may be awarded a scholarship of the minister responsible for school education. The amount of the scholarship per month is equal to that of the Prime Minister’s scholarship.
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