



Farnesina

Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale

Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation

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#VIVEREALLITALIANA

The Italian Education System abroad



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1. Why having an education system abroad makes sense

- “*Hard power*”, “*soft power*”, “*sharp power*”?

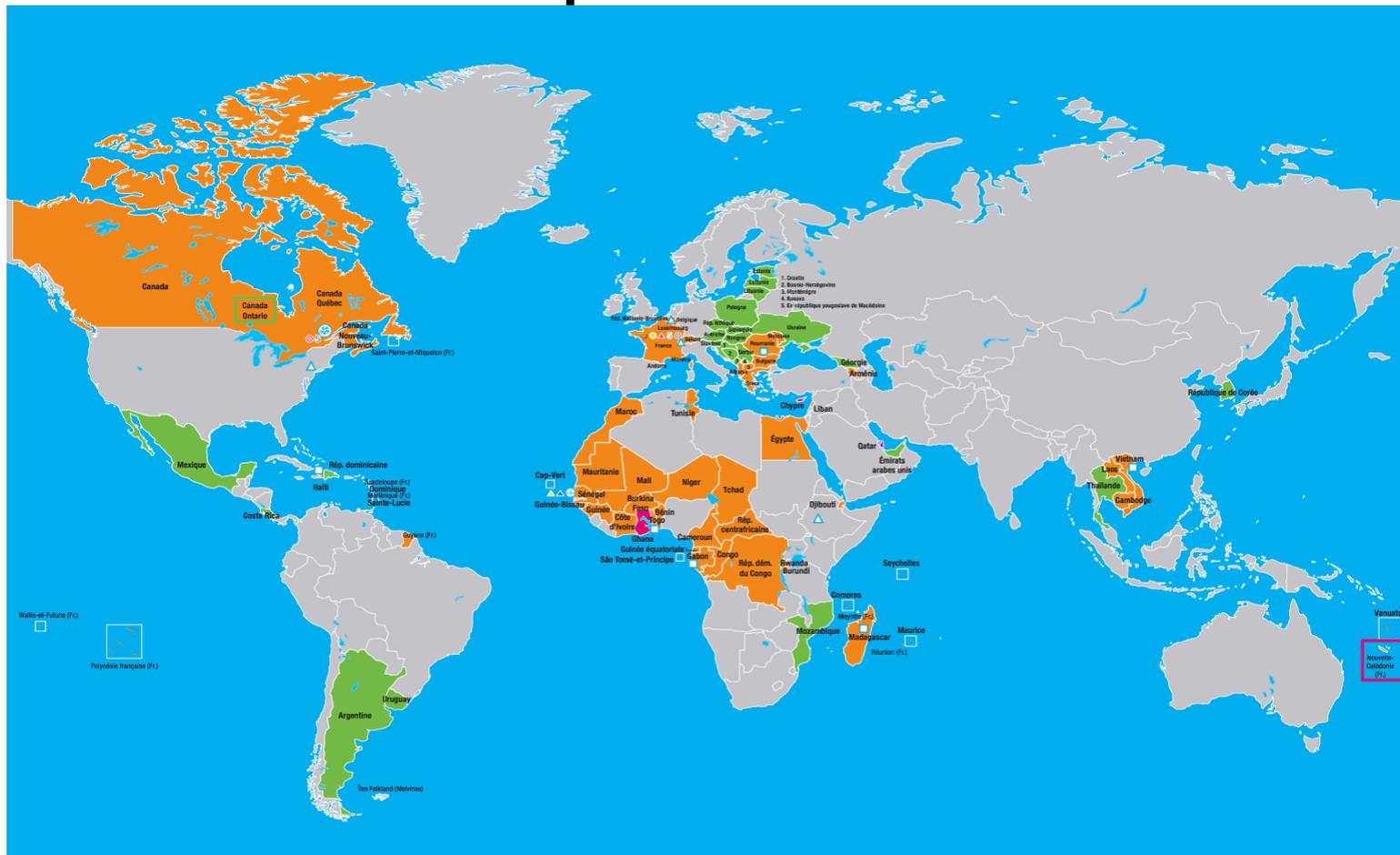


1. Why having an education system abroad makes sense

- **Effective cultural diplomacy** hinges on three crucial factors:
 - **Who** does it?
 - Through **what means**?
 - To achieve **what goals**?



Example 1: "Who?"



- Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (siège, Paris)
- △ Représentations permanentes (Addis-Abeba, Bruxelles, Genève, New York)
- Bureaux régionaux (Antananarivo, Bucarest, Hanoi, Libreville, Lomé, Port-au-Prince)
- ✳ Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable (IFDD, Québec)
- ⊕ Institut de la Francophonie pour l'éducation et la formation (IFEF, Dakar)
- 54 États et gouvernements membres de l'OUF
- 4 États et gouvernements membres associés
- 26 États et gouvernements observateurs
- Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF, Paris)
- Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)
- Rectorat et siège (Montréal)
- Rectorat et services centraux (Paris)
- Ⓜ TVSMONDE (Paris) Ⓜ TVS Québec Canada (Montréal)
- Université Senghor (Alexandrie)
- Association internationale des maîtres francophones (AIMF, Paris)
- △ Conférence des ministres de l'Éducation de la Francophonie (Confemem, Dakar)
- △ Conférence des ministres de la Jeunesse et des Sports de la Francophonie (ConfMJS, Dakar)

Les frontières et les noms indiqués sur cette carte n'impliquent pas reconnaissance ou acceptation officielle par l'OUF.

Example 2: “Through what means?”

Comparison of Ministry of Foreign Affairs expenditures (not including public development aid) as a percentage of GDP, selected European Countries

COUNTRIES	2016 GDP	NET SPENDING ON MFA (NOT INCLUDING PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT AID)	%
Germany	3.134.070.000.000	5.232.408.000	0,17%
France	2.228.857.000.000	3.002.067.990	0,13%
United Kingdom	2.366.911.900.000	2.528.647.597	0,11%
Italy	1.672.438.300.000	1.727.859.140	0,10%

Source: https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/trasparenza_comunicazioni_legali/bilancio-trasparente/quanto-spendiamo/confronto-rispetto-al-pil.html

1. Why having an education system abroad makes sense

- Within this field, **educational diplomacy** assumes a special significance, as it involves the provision of an **essential social service**.
- To achieve success, it has to **strike a balance** between systems inspired by different cultural norms and values.
 - Example: teaching **political theory** or providing **career counseling** in **Asmara** vis-à-vis in **Zurich**.

1. Why having an Italian education system abroad makes sense

- *Who are we? Or what linguistic and cultural capital can Italy rely on abroad?*

Italian does not rank as one of the most widely spoken languages in the world.

Italian is not a *lingua franca* on a global or even regional level.

However, Italian ranks within the 5 most widely studied languages in the world.

1. Why having an Italian education system abroad makes sense

- *What goals do we set for ourselves?*

In the past, teaching of the Italian language abroad was primarily directed at our **communities abroad**, thus providing them **assistance** and helping safeguard their specific cultural heritage.

Today, this is coupled with a marked **promotional activity of our «Country system»**, with the goal of attracting a foreign audience towards it.

In this perspective, we seek to achieve two main goals:

- On a strictly **educational level**, to provide the **best possible service**;
- On an **educational-diplomacy level**, to engender **positive spill-overs** for our Country-system as a whole.

1. Why having an Italian education system abroad makes sense

- *What means can we rely on?*

In order to achieve **multi-faceted goals** we can draw from a **well-sorted «toolbox»**, including for instance:

- The involvement of **institutional** (MFA, Ministry of Education etc.) and **private** (Dante Alighieri society, etc.) **actors**;
- **Human** (school staff posted abroad and locally hired personnel) and **financial** (83 million Euros, both for personnel costs and for subsidies) **resources**;
- **Different types of educational institutions** abroad (state schools, state-recognised private schools, Italian classes within foreign schools etc.), adding to the system's **flexibility**.

3. The Italian education system abroad

Structure

- State schools;
- State-recognised private schools;
- Other Italian schools abroad («non-recognised» private schools, Italian classes within foreign schools, including European schools, etc.);
- Lectorships;
- Associations of Italian schools abroad;
- Italian language and culture courses;
- (European Schools).

Italian education system abroad – student figures

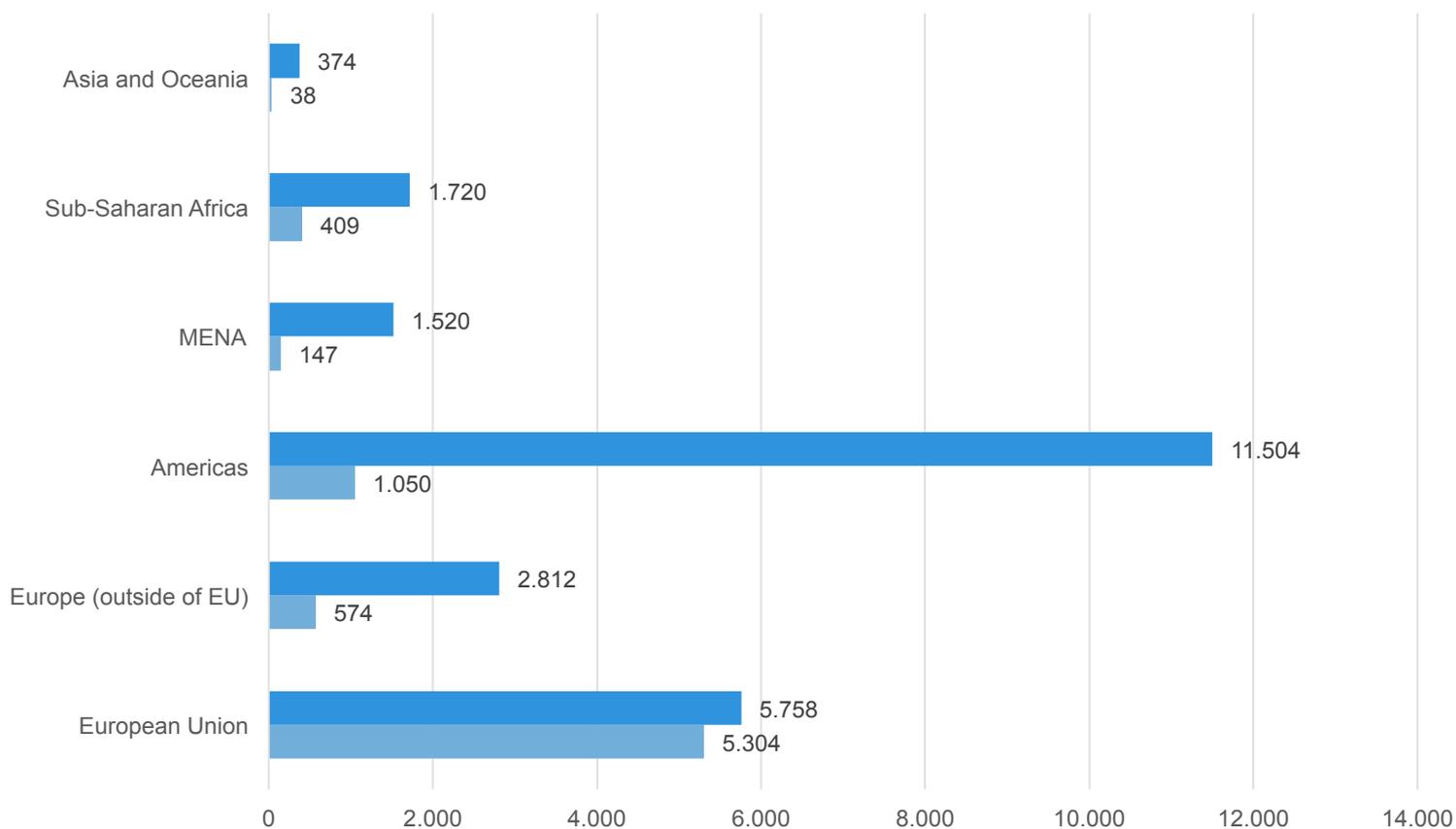


+1% increase
in enrolments
in 2017;

State schools	4.208
State-recognised private schools	16.224
«Non-recognised» private schools	95
Italian classes within European schools	2.039
Italian classes within foreign schools	8.644
TOTAL	31.210
Of which ITALIAN STUDENTS	7.522
FOREIGN STUDENTS	23.688



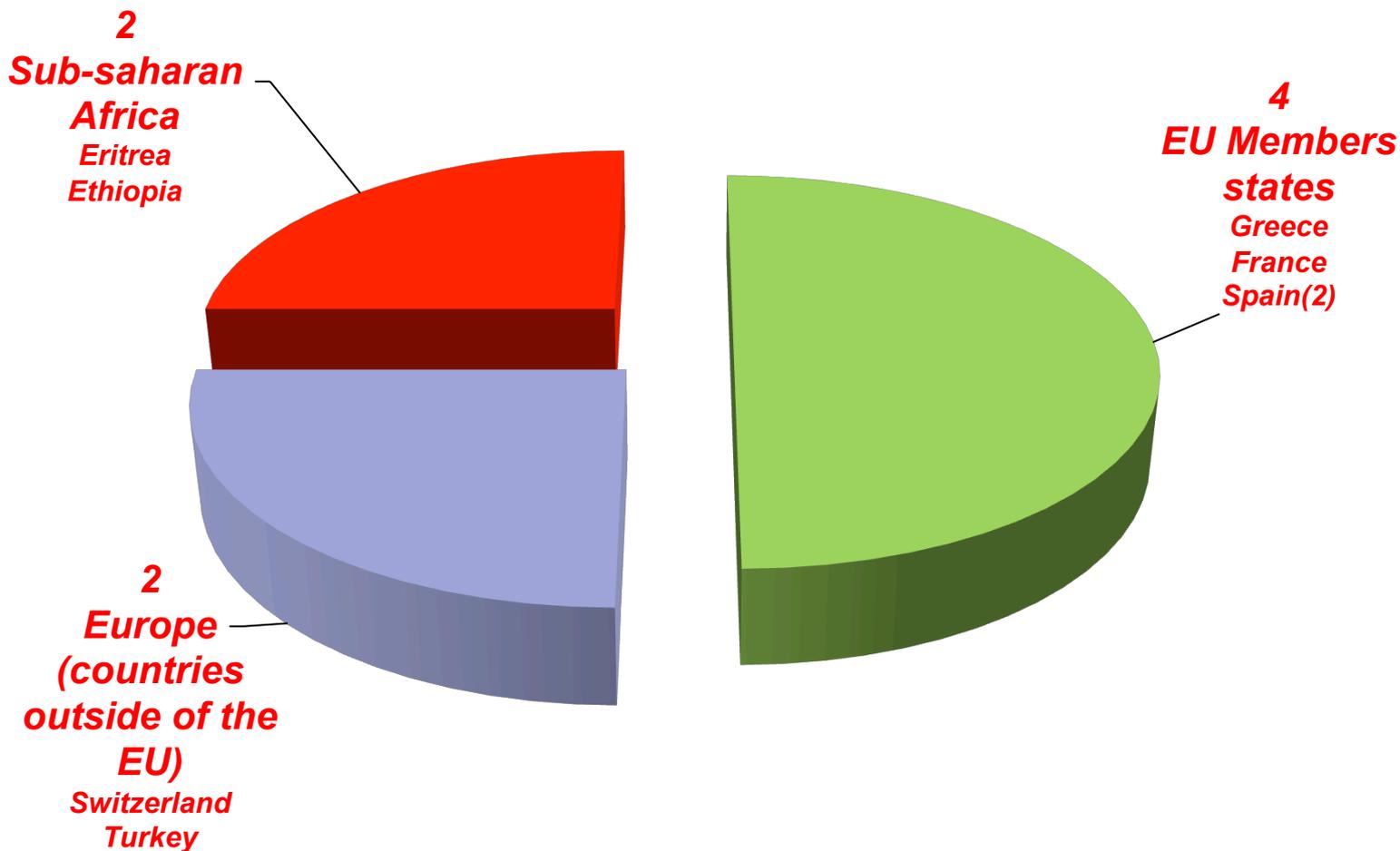
Italian education system abroad – Student distribution (school year 2016/2017)



Source: database «Culturali 2000»
of the Directorate General for Cultural and Economic Promotion and Innovation

3. The Italian education system abroad

State schools



3. The Italian education system abroad

State schools

- State schools abroad are subject to the MFA's supervision; they report to Embassies/ Consulates;
- They enjoy **administrative and financial autonomy**, under the school principal's responsibility;
- «Licei» have a **four-year curriculum** (instead of five years, as in Italy);
- State schools are staffed by both Italian education personnel and locally recruited teachers;
- They receive **financial support from the Foreign Ministry** (in **2017**, for instance, such supported amounted to **€ 677.435** of which € 520.000 to improve the school's technological means).

Upsides:

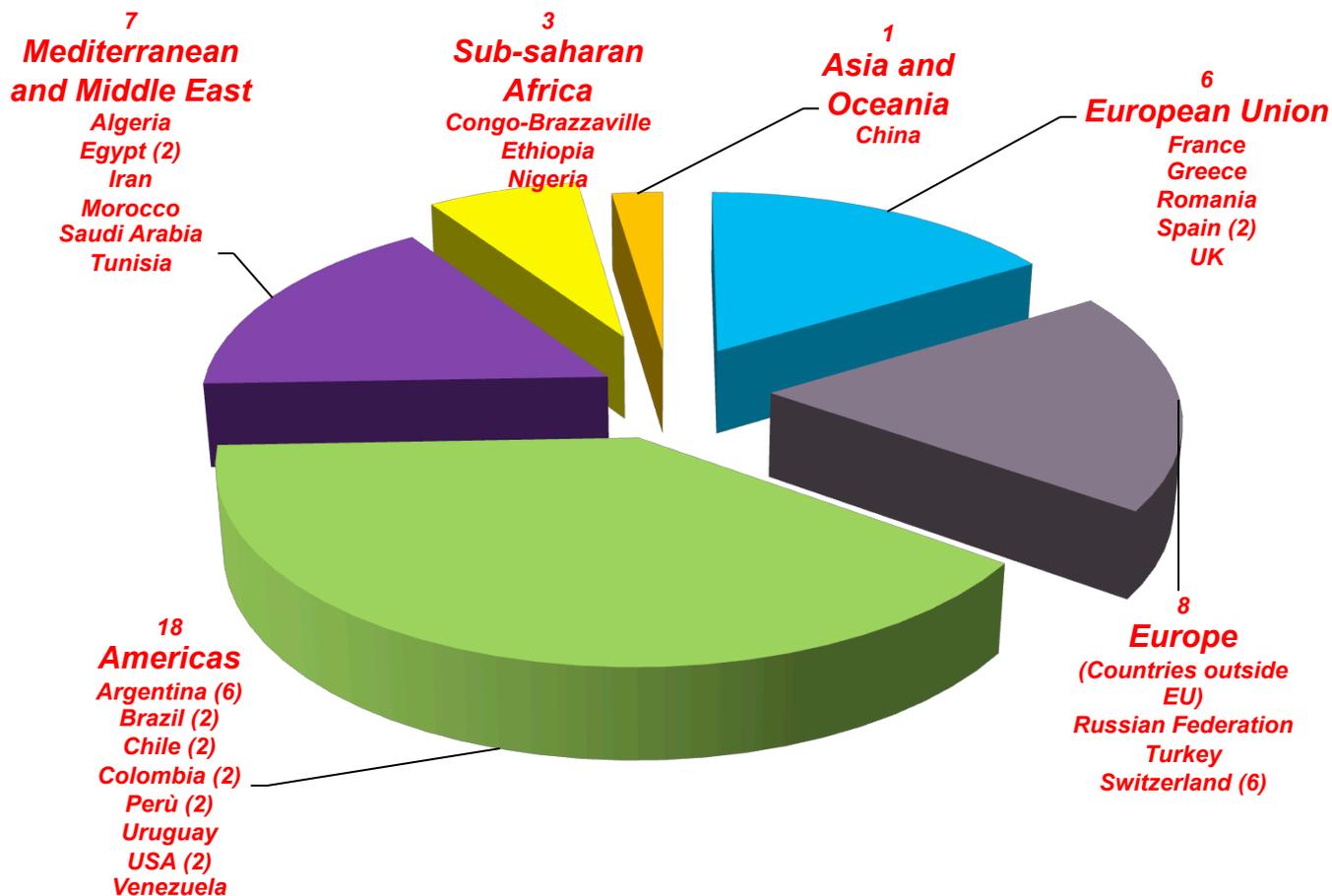
- «Exporting» the Italian model abroad.
- Pervasiveness and continuity of the syllabus.

Challenges:

- State schools are complex, not easily replicable organisations.
- Adapting state schools to foreign, often very different contexts.

3. The Italian education system abroad

State-recognised schools



3. The Italian education system abroad

State-recognised schools

- Cf. **art. 33 of the Italian constitution**: “Entities and private persons have the right to establish schools and institutions of education, at no cost to the State. The law, when setting out the rights and obligations for the non-state schools which request parity, shall ensure that these schools enjoy full liberty and offer their pupils an education and qualifications of the same standards as those afforded to pupils in state schools”;
- According to Legislative Decree 64/2017 State recognition of private schools is performed through a **joint decree by the MFA and the Ministry of Education**. The same conditions apply as for private schools located in Italy.
- In 2018 «*La Scuola*» in San Francisco became the **43rd State-recognized private school abroad**.
- As for State schools, «licei» offer a **four-year curriculum**;
- State-recognised schools receive **financial contributions from the MFA (€ 1.717.646 in 2018)**.

Upsides:

- Flexibility, while preserving the quality of the syllabus.
- Geographically more widely spread than state schools.

Challenges:

- Maintaining an effective supervision.
- Adapting the model to non-traditional contexts (e.g. Gulf Countries).

3. The Italian education system abroad

Non-State recognised private schools (“Scuole non paritarie”)

- Diplomas issued by schools belonging to this category have no legal value in Italy;
- However, attending them counts as **compulsory school attendance** according to Italian law;
- There exist **two non-recognised private schools abroad**: the «*Sandro Pertini*» school in **Basel** and a primary and nursery school in **Izmir**, Turkey.

Challenge: extending the model to other contexts, possibly as a stepping stone to the establishment of a more structured educational institution.

3. The Italian education system abroad

Lectorships

- Lecturers are second-grade professors teaching Italian at foreign Universities;
- Some lecturers carry out **extracurricular activities**, taking part in initiatives organized by Embassies, Consulates or Italian Cultural Institutes abroad;
- Often, lecturers act as “**cultural antennas**” in areas which our education system abroad would otherwise not be able to reach;
- In the school year 2018/2019, **124 lecturers** will be serving in **59 Countries**. 41 of them are tasked with extracurricular activities.

Upsides:

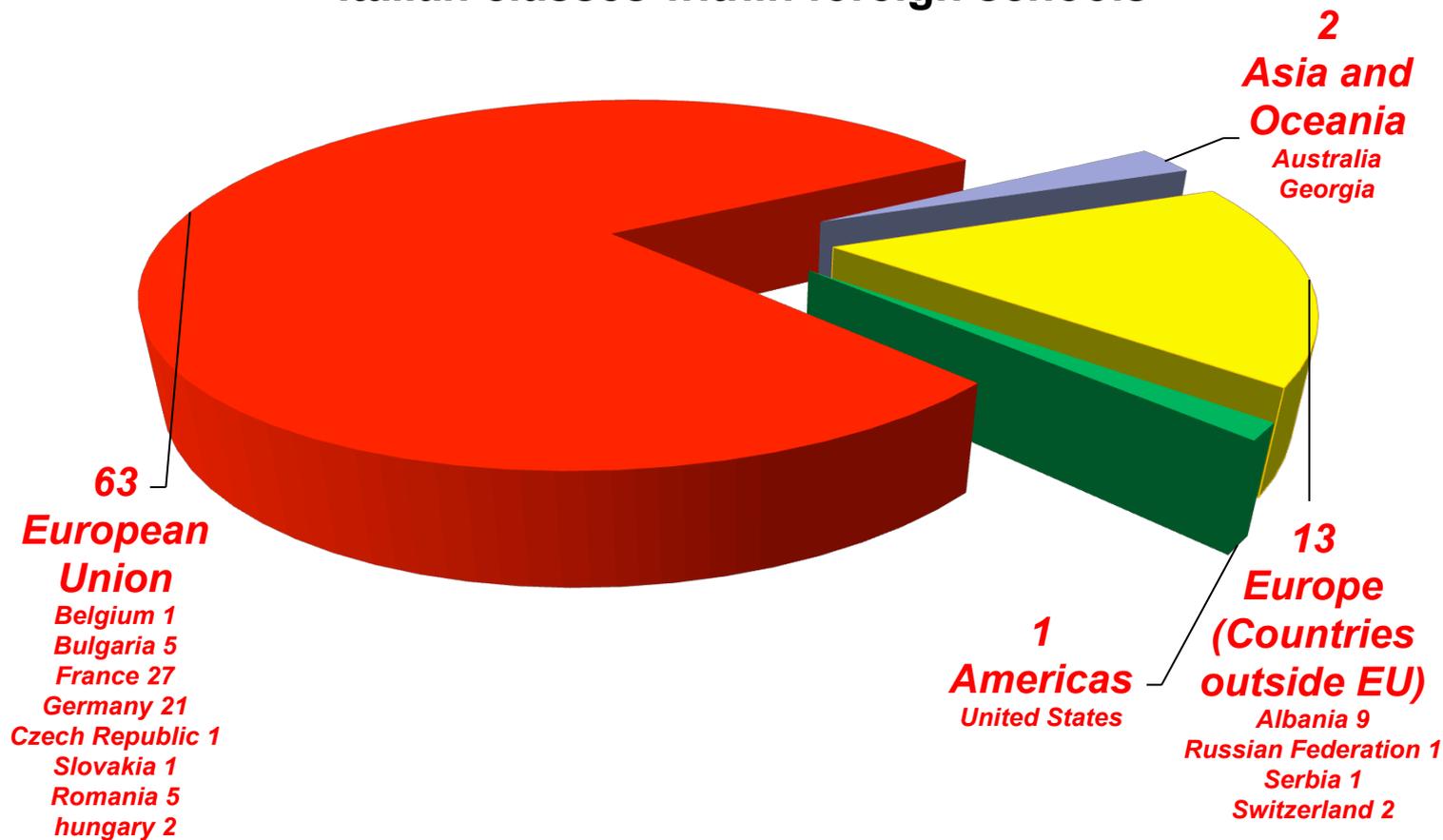
- One of the easiest ways to establish a cultural presence.
- Direct link to foreign higher-education systems.

Challenges:

- Enhancing integration with foreign education systems.
- Making the most out of extracurricular activities.

3. The Italian education system abroad

Italian classes within foreign schools



3. The Italian education system abroad

Italian classes within foreign schools

- Italian classes within foreign schools are the **most recent component** of the system;
- As to date, **no legislation exists which regulates their status**: often, they are established and regulated through an **international agreement**;
- As a rule of thumb, Italian classes should entail the **teaching of non-linguistic disciplines in Italian** alongside Italian-language teaching.
- The Italian **MFA contributes financially** to their establishment and operation (**€ 685.309 issued in 2017**).
- Once a shared definition of Italian classes within foreign schools is established in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, an official list will be issued.

Upsides:

- The category's potential value is largely unexplored.

Challenges:

- Establishing a unitary legal framework.

3. The Italian education system abroad

Italian language and culture courses

- Italian language and culture courses abroad date back to a **long tradition**, historically closely related to that of our **migrant communities**;
- They are run by private, non-profit «**promoting bodies**». Around **90 such bodies receive financial support by the MFA** worldwide, reaching almost **300.000 pupils**;
- Italian language and culture courses constitute a **heterogeneous category**, which includes courses in foreign schools as well as extracurricular activities.
- In 2017, the MFA has contributed to their organization with **€ 11.996.603**.

Upsides:

- Widespread presence abroad, particularly in the Americas and in Europe.

Challenges:

- Rationalising the existing variety of course types and the procedures through which financial contributions are issued.

3. The Italian education system abroad

European schools

- The European schools System is regulated by an international agreement signed on June 21st 1994 (Convention defining the statute of the European schools, ratified by Italy through Law n. 151/1996).
- **European schools are not a component of the Italian education system abroad properly. Rather, they constitute an autonomous system, to whose functioning Italy contributes through the secondment of 144 teachers.**
- The System is made up of **13 European schools in 7 Countries** (Belgium, Italy in **Varese**, Germany, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Spain). Moreover, «**accredited Schools**» are schools belonging to the education systems of Member States which offer a similar syllabus to full-fledged European Schools, including the European Baccalaureate (2 of these schools are located in Italy, in **Brindisi and Parma**).

Upsides:

- The European schools system is the most advanced form of cooperation at the European level in the field of education; the didactic offer is deeply innovative.

Challenges:

- Enhancing cooperation with European partners to further develop this model also outside the EU: historically, European schools were established to cater to the needs of European officers' families.

3. The Italian education system abroad

Education personnel abroad

- The distribution of the Italian education personnel abroad between different Countries and educational institutions is performed first and foremost to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, based on proposals submitted by its diplomatic and consular delegations;
- The eventual decision is adopted by means of a joint decree by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Economy and Finance;
- The whole procedure is central to effectively managing the system: its essential aim is to ensure that the available human and financial resources are put to their best possible use.

It is, to all effects and purposes, the fundamental educational-diplomacy act!

3. The Italian education system abroad

Education personnel abroad

Category	Total school year 2017/2018	% of total	Total school year 2018/2019	% of total
school principals	42	6,73%	44	6,53%
teachers in state schools	199	31,89%	212	31,45%
teachers in italian language and culture courses	148	23,72%	150	22,27%
Lecturers	111	17,78%	124	18,39%
Teachers in foreign schools	84	13,46%	96	14,24%
Teachers in state-recognized schools	21	3,37%	28	4,15%
Administrative personnel	19	3,05%	20	2,96%
TOTAL	624	100%	674	100%

3. The Italian education system abroad

Italian education personell in the European Schools system

COUNTRY	SCHOOL LOCATION	SECRETARY-GENERAL	DIRECTOR	DEPUTY-DIRECTOR	EDUCATION COUNSELLOR	TEACHERS-NURSERY SCHOOLS	TEACHERS-PRIMARY SCHOOLS	TEACHERS-1° GRADE SECONDARY SCHOOLS	TEACHERS-2° GRADE SECONDARY SCHOOLS
BELGIUM	Bruxelles – Secretariat General	1**							
	Bruxelles I			1*		1	6	2	6
	Bruxelles II				1**	1	5	1	7
	Bruxelles III							2	1
	Bruxelles IV				1**	1	5	2	5
GERMANY	Frankfurt		1***		1**	1	5		6
	Karlsruhe								1
	Munich				1*		5		5
ITALY	Varese				1*	1	7	4	8
LUXEMBOURG	Luxembourg I			1**				1	
	Luxembourg II					1	5	1	8
SPAIN	Alicante							1	
TOTAL		1	1	2	5	6	38	14	47

NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL – TOTAL **47**

SECONDARY SCHOOL - TOTAL **66**

DIRECTORS - TOTAL **1**

TOTAL **114**

* = primary-school teacher

** = 2° grade secondary-school teacher

*** = Director

4. Outlook

On an educational level:

- Fleshing out an **effective evaluation framework** for the Italian education system abroad, drawing from the experience gathered on the national territory;
- **Establishing a common framework for Italian classes within foreign school** in cooperation with the Ministry of Education;
- **Making the most out of available resources**, fine-tuning the System's articulation based on the different contexts and avoiding overlapping (e.g. Italian language and culture courses vs. Italian classes within foreign schools).

4. Outlook

On a cultural-diplomacy level:

- Intensifying our presence in **high-potential areas** (e.g. China, India, Gulf Countries), without spreading our system too thin;
- Favoring the **integration of our educational institutions** abroad with our **Country System as a whole** (e.g. establishing a preferential channel towards our higher-education system and labor market);
- Promote a **higher degree of coordination at the European level**, bearing in mind that, in the field of cultural diplomacy, our traditional «rivals» could become, in some contexts, our best «allies».

5. Further reading

- https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/politica_estera/cultura/scuoleitalianeallestero
- Salvetti, Patrizia, “*Le scuole italiane all’estero*”, in “*Storia dell’emigrazione italiana – arrivi*”, Donzelli Editore, Roma, 2002
- DGSP - MAECI, “*Scuole italiane all’estero*”, Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato italiano, Roma, 2018.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION