

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 452 717

FL 026 690

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 TITLE North Frisian: The North Frisian Language in Education in Germany. Regional Dossiers Series.  
 INSTITUTION Fryske Academy, Leeuwarden (Netherlands). Mercator-Education.  
 SPONS AGENCY European Commission, Brussels (Belgium).  
 PUB DATE 1997-00-00  
 NOTE 28p.; For other documents in the series, see FL 026 686-89 and FL 026 691-94.  
 AVAILABLE FROM Mercator-Education, P.O. Box 54, 8900 AB Ljouwert/Leeuwarden, The Netherlands. Tel: 31-58-2131414; Fax: 31-58-2131409; e-mail: mercator@fa.knaw.nl; Web site: <http://www.fa.knaw.nl/uk/mercator/fa-merc.html>.  
 PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)  
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS Cultural Maintenance; Danish; Educational Policy; Ethnic Groups; Foreign Countries; German; \*Heritage Education; \*Language Maintenance; Language Minorities; \*Language Planning; National Programs; \*Native Language Instruction; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; Uncommonly Taught Languages  
 IDENTIFIERS European Union; \*Frisian; Germany

## ABSTRACT

This regional dossier aims to provide concise, descriptive information and basic educational statistics about minority language education in a specific region of the European Union--the northwestern part of the German state of Schleswig-Holstein. Details are provided about the features of the educational system, recent educational policies, divisions of responsibilities, main actors, legal arrangements, support structures, and qualitative information on a number of schools, teachers, pupils, and financial investments. This information is designed to serve the needs of policy makers, researchers, teachers, students, and journalists as they assess the developments in European minority language schooling. This information may also serve as a first orientation towards further research (additional readings are suggested and contact information provided). Specifically, information is provided on preschool, primary, secondary, vocational, higher, and adult education, as well as a review of educational research, summary statistics, and overall prospects for the use of the language under study. The subject of this dossier is North Frisian, spoken in the rural German district of North Frisia (Kreis Nordfriesland), on the west coast just south of the Danish border. The language consists of none main dialects. It is an independent West Germanic language, but is it heavily influenced by Low German and Danish. (Contains 19 references.) (KFT)

ED 452 717

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# North Frisian

## The North Frisian language in education in Germany

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This document was published by Mercator-Education with financial support from the Fryske Akademy and the European Commission.  
(DG XXII: Education, Training and Youth)

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This regional dossier was compiled by Alastair Walker in 1997. Data reflect the situation in 1996-1997, unless stated otherwise.

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## Foreword to the regional dossiers

### *background*

For several years now, Mercator-Education has attempted to achieve one of its principal goals: to gather, store and distribute information on minority language education in European regions. Regional or minority languages are languages which differ from the official language of that State and which are traditionally used within a given territory of that State by nationals of that State forming a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population.<sup>1</sup> To date, Mercator-Education has been successful in establishing a computerized data bank containing bibliographic data, information about persons and organizations involved with minority language issues, and data collected during four inventory studies on pre-school education (Goot, Renkema & Stuijt, 1994), primary education (Sikma & Gorter, 1991), learning materials (Tjeerdsma & Sikma, 1994) and teacher training (Dekkers, 1995). In addition there is a need for documents stating in brief the most essential features of the educational system of regions with an autochthonous lesser used language. With the establishment of regional dossiers it is intended to meet this need.

### *aim*

Regional dossiers aim at providing concise descriptive information and basic educational statistics about minority language education in a specific region of the European Community. This kind of information, such as features of the educational system, recent educational policies, division of responsibilities, main actors, legal arrangements, support structures, and also quantitative information on the number of schools, teachers, pupils and financial investments, can serve several purposes.

### *target group*

Policy makers, researchers, teachers, students and journalists may use the information provided to assess developments in European minority language schooling. They can also use a regional dossier as a first orientation towards further research (further reading and addresses are included) or as a source of

ideas for improving educational provision in their own region.

*link with  
EURYDICE*

In order to link these regional descriptions with those of national educational systems, it was decided to follow the format used by EURYDICE, the European education information network in the European Union. EURYDICE provides information on the administration and structure of all levels of education in Member States of the European Union.<sup>2</sup> The information provided in the regional dossiers is focused on language use at the various levels of education.

*contents*

The remainder of this dossier consists firstly of an introduction to the region under study, followed by six sections each dealing with a specific level of the educational system. Sections eight to ten cover research, prospects and summary statistics. These brief descriptions contain factual information presented in a readily accessible way. For detailed information and political discussions about language use at the various levels of education, the reader is referred to other sources.

## 1

### Introduction to this issue

*language*

The North Frisian language is one of the indigenous languages in the German "Land" of Schleswig-Holstein and is spoken in the rural district of North Frisia (*Kreis Nordfriesland*) on the west coast just south of the Dano-German border including the North Frisian islands. It is also spoken on the island of Heligoland which belongs to the district of Pinneberg. The language consists of nine main dialects, each of which has its own name. The name of the mainland Frisian dialects is based on the concept of Frisian, e.g. *frasch*, *freesk*, *fräisch*, whereas the island dialects are called after each particular island, viz. *sölring* (Sylt), *fering* (Föhr), *öömring* (Amrum) and *halunder* (Heligoland). North Frisian is an independent West Germanic language which has, however, over the centuries been heavily influenced by

Danish and Low German, and latterly also by High German. It is related to West Frisian in the Netherlands and more closely to Sater Frisian in Lower Saxony (Germany).

Of the approx. 156,000 inhabitants of North Frisia, some 8-10,000 speak Frisian (5-7%)<sup>3</sup> and about 60,000 (40%) consider themselves to be Frisians. Frisian is traditionally an oral language and it was not until the beginning of the 19th century that Frisian started to be used as a written medium. Due to an awareness of the decline of the language there is a tradition of language promotion. This was particularly strong between the two world wars, and has been so since about 1970.

Each dialect has its own orthography, grammar and vocabulary, most of which can now be considered relatively standardized. Frisian is used in various domains of society on an informal level, such as in the family, community activities, etc. and is also being introduced into some domains on a more formal level, e.g. education and the church.

The new constitution in Schleswig-Holstein, which came into force in 1990, mentions protection and promotion of the Danish minority and the Frisian people. The Frisian language, on the other hand, has no official status in Germany. However, the Federal Government will probably include Frisian in part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, following the suggestion made by the government of Schleswig-Holstein.

#### *education system*

Each "Land" in the Federal Republic of Germany has its own education system. The education system in North Frisia is the same as for the rest of Schleswig-Holstein and is based upon the Education Act of August 1st, 1990 (*Schleswig-Holsteinisches Schulgesetz*).

Although the linguistic situation in North Frisia and on Heligoland differs from the rest of Schleswig-Holstein, there are no separate regulations for Frisian. Tertiary education is governed by the law concerning the Institutes of Further

Education of April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1995 (*Gesetz über die Hochschulen im Lande Schleswig-Holstein*).

*public and private*

Schools in Schleswig-Holstein are generally state run. The only exceptions in North Frisia are the private schools belonging to the Danish minority. These come under the auspices of the Danish School Association in South Schleswig and are funded partly by the "Land" and partly by the State of Denmark.

*administration*

The "Land" authorities are responsible for the running, content and general framework of schools including teaching personnel. They control education by means of laws, decrees and regulations and are also responsible for Frisian in education. The local municipality is in general responsible for non-personnel matters, e.g. the up-keep of the school buildings and material provision, such as furniture.

*inspection*

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Culture in Kiel has the overall responsibility for school inspection in Schleswig-Holstein. The "Land" is divided into 15 school inspectorates, one of which is the rural district of North Frisia. The duties of the three inspectors here include supervision, both with respect to personnel as well as the correct implementation of the general regulations (education act, school curricula), as well as advising teachers in pedagogical matters. One inspector is responsible for the teaching of Frisian in school.

*support structure*

The "Land" of Schleswig-Holstein supports a central body, the "*Landesinstitut Schleswig-Holstein für Praxis und Theorie der Schule (IPTS)*", which is responsible for the initiation of newly qualified teachers into their future career as well as for in-service training. The Institute also advises teachers, parents, schools and inspectorates in questions relating to teaching and education and local municipalities with respect to the furnishing of schools. Seminars are organized twice a year under the auspices of the IPTS for the teachers of Frisian in which they participate in a Frisian lesson and exchange materials and experience. A



work group is also preparing an unofficial curriculum for Frisian. A teacher has been seconded part-time to the North Frisian Institute in Bredstedt to help prepare teaching materials.

In the following sections the use and position of Frisian at each level of the education system in North Frisia is discussed in more detail.

## 2

### Pre-school education

#### *target group*

Provisions for children up to the age of 6 constitute pre-school education. These provisions are not part of compulsory education. The institutions providing pre-school education are in general day nurseries (up to the age of 3) and kindergartens (ages 3-6). There are also pre-school classes for children who will reach the compulsory school age the following year. On 1.8.1996 a Federal law came into force which guarantees all children the right to attend kindergarten.

#### *kindergarten*

In kindergarten young children can develop language competence, creative aptitudes and especially social abilities and they are prepared for school. The responsibility for the kindergartens usually lies with the municipalities and such public organizations as the church, although some are also privately run. They are financed partly by the state, the local district council, the institution responsible for the kindergarten, and by parental contributions. Pre-school classes are incorporated into a primary school and run by the bodies responsible for primary education. These bodies cover the material costs and the state bears the personnel costs. Such classes are, however, due to be discontinued as from the end of the school year 1997-98.

#### *language use*

There is no research available pertaining to language use in kindergarten apart from the project mentioned under "Frisian in kindergarten". Most teaching is, however, through the medium of German.

<i>statistics</i>	On 31.12.1994 there were 97 institutions of pre-school education in North Frisia accommodating 4647 children. 92 of these institutions were kindergartens.
<i>Frisian in kindergarten</i>	In 1991 a project was initiated to promote the acquisition of Frisian in kindergarten and primary school. This took place in a mainland village (Lindholm) and in a village on the island of Föhr (Süderende). Following a six-month probationary period the project ran from August 1993 until July 1996 and proved to be very successful. One result of the project was the opening of a Frisian kindergarten on the island of Sylt (Keitum), and there are plans for further kindergartens with Frisian as a language of communication. (Corinth/Martinen, 1996).
<i>instruction material</i>	In the course of the project mentioned above, the teachers involved developed their own materials.

### 3 Primary education

<i>target group</i>	The primary school in Schleswig-Holstein caters for pupils aged 6-10 (grades 1-4). There are also school kindergartens ( <i>Schulkindergärten</i> ) for children who have reached school age but who are not yet sufficiently mature to attend school.
<i>legislation</i>	The last decree pertaining to Frisian in education was issued on 17.10.1947. This referred to school in general (ages 6-15) and principally reinstated the decree of 19.05.1928 which had fallen into neglect due to the rise of National Socialism and the circumstances leading to the war. As there has been no legislation since, Frisian can only be taught in school on a voluntary basis.
<i>language use</i>	Frisian was first used in education on the island of Sylt in 1909. This, however, was soon partly forbidden by the Prussian Ministry of Education. A decree in 1925 allowed Frisian to be taught in school in order to help prevent the decline of the language. A further decree in 1928 specified

certain measures for the teaching of Frisian. Following the 2nd world war a decree in 1947 continued the initiatives of the previous decrees, emphasising, however, that Frisian classes were voluntary. Following the curriculum of 1986 which allowed Frisian to be taught as part of the German lessons, the new curriculum of 1997 allows Frisian to be included in all subjects.

*statistics*

There are 52 public and 17 private primary schools in North Frisia of which 31 are combined with intermediate schools. Frisian is taught in 21 primary schools as well as in the primary section of the school on Heligoland. These are practically all the schools in the actual language area including some villages where Frisian is scarcely used any longer in daily life. There are 968 pupils participating in Frisian lessons in the school year 1996/97.

*Frisian as subject*

Frisian is taught mostly in the 3rd and 4th grade and in general there are one or two lessons a week. The total number of lessons given each grade in the 22 schools mentioned above are: 1st grade = 9, 2nd grade = 18, 3rd grade = 51, 4th grade = 42.

*medium of instruction*

Frisian is rarely used as a medium of instruction outside Frisian lessons except in the Danish-Frisian school in Risum which uses the three languages of Danish, Frisian and German. This is also the reason why this school has a special status.

*research*

The only research published on Frisian in primary school is in connection with the project mentioned under "Frisian in Kindergarten". The results were published in 1996 (Corinth/Martinen, 1996).

*teachers*

The teachers of Frisian can be divided into categories according to various criteria: a) those with mother-tongue and those with acquired linguistic competence, b) those who are trained teachers and those who have had no formal training, and c) those trained teachers who have studied Frisian and those who have not.

There is no research available concerning the Frisian competence of the teachers in North Frisia.

*instruction  
material*

In general the Frisian teachers have to make their own materials. They are, however, helped by a teacher seconded to the North Frisian Institute for this purpose. There are also bi-annual meetings of the Frisian teachers where they among other things exchange materials and ideas. Frisian university scholars have in the past also provided them with materials. Help has also generously been given by West Frisian colleagues.

Teaching materials are generally financed through the budget line allocated by parliament in Kiel for the promotion of the Frisian language and culture (total in 1996: DM 150.000,-but as from 1997 being reduced) and/or with the help of the Frisian associations.

*special  
education*

Education for children with a handicap or with learning or behavioural difficulties is provided by special schools. Children can attend these schools for the whole of their school career. Integration of disabled children into the ordinary school system has been possible since 1990 and has shown an increase over the past few years. In North Frisia there were 10 schools for special education (primary and secondary level) catering for 669 pupils in 1995. Up to the end of the school year 1996/97 Frisian was taught in one such school.

*curriculum*

The primary school curriculum also applies to special schools except for schools for learning disabled and mentally retarded children. In the first instance Frisian is optional.

**4**

## **Secondary education**

*structure*

Four different types of school are responsible for secondary education. The grammar school (*Gymnasium*) is attended by pupils aged between 10 and 19 with nine grades. The secondary modern school (*Realschule*) caters for pupils aged

between 10 and 16 (six grades) and the intermediate school (*Hauptschule*) for pupils aged between 10 and 15 or 16 (five or six grades). There is also a number of comprehensive schools (*Gesamtschulen*) in Schleswig-Holstein, but none in North Frisia.

*statistics*

In North Frisia there are 6 public grammar schools, 18 secondary modern (17 public and 1 private) and 36 intermediate schools (21 public and 15 private) of which 31 are combined with primary schools. On September 1st, 1995 there was a total of 10,206 pupils in private and public secondary education.

*Frisian as subject*

Frisian is taught in 2 grammar schools (in Niebüll in the classes 5 and 6, and in Wyk on the island Föhr in the classes 5 and 6 as well as in the classes 11-13), and in 3 intermediate schools with a total number of 24 lessons. There is at present no secondary modern school teaching Frisian. The Danish-Frisian primary and intermediate school in Risum also teaches Frisian as a subject.

*medium of instruction*

The Danish-Frisian school in Risum also uses Frisian as a medium of instruction.

*instruction material*

In general the Frisian teachers have to make their own materials.

## 5 Vocational education

*structure*

Vocational education covers various types of vocational training: a) *Berufsschulen* prepare students after leaving school for an apprenticeship and accompany them through it. Teaching takes place one or two days a week or in blocks. Students attend a *Berufsschule* until they have completed an apprenticeship or have come of age. b) *Berufsfachschulen* give students a full-time vocational training. c) *Berufsaufbauschulen* prepare students who have attended an intermediate school for a secondary modern school

leaving certificate during or after an apprenticeship. d) *Fachoberschulen* qualify students after completing an apprenticeship for a place in a *Fachhochschule*. Prerequisite is in general a secondary modern school leaving certificate. Full-time teaching takes a year, part-time teaching correspondingly longer. e) The *Fachgymnasium* qualifies students with a secondary modern school leaving certificate to attend university or to start a comparable training course. The full-time course takes three years. f) *Fachschulen* give students further training after completing their initial training and several years' work experience. The full-time course lasts one or more years, part-time teaching correspondingly longer.

*statistics*

In September 1995 there were 21 schools of vocational education in North Frisia with 6584 students (2 *Berufsschulen*, 10 *Berufsfachschulen*, 2 *Fachoberschulen*, 2 *Fachgymnasien*, 3 *Fachschulen* and 2 others).

*language use*

There is no provision for the use of Frisian in vocational education.

**6****Higher education***structure*

Higher education includes higher professional education (*Fachhochschule*) and university education.

*statistics*

There are five state and three private institutes for higher professional education in Schleswig-Holstein providing education for approx. 16,000 students, one conservatory with approx. 470 students, and three universities with a total of approx. 26,000 students (winter semester 1996/97). There are no institutes of higher education in North Frisia. In Kiel and Flensburg some provision for Frisian exists. (see below).

*language use*

The official language in higher education is German. Other languages can be used for teaching if the circumstances

warrant it. There is, however, no official ruling on this matter.

*teacher training*

Teacher training is provided at the Universities of Kiel and Flensburg. At the end of their courses students take a first state examination. After a two-year practical training period (known as the *Referendariat*) at a primary or secondary school, a second state examination follows.

*primary level*

Teacher training in Frisian at a primary level is provided at the University of Flensburg. Students here have to study three subjects, one of which can be Frisian which became recognized as an independent subject in 1989. At the time of writing there are governmental plans to reduce the number of subjects needed to study for primary school to two. It is therefore possible that students in the future will only be able to study Frisian as a supplementary subject (*Erweiterungsfach*).

*secondary level*

Teacher training at a secondary level is provided at the Universities of Kiel and Flensburg. In Kiel students are trained for grammar school. They are required to study two main subjects and Frisian can be chosen as a supplementary third subject (*Erweiterungsstudium*). It is also possible to gain qualifications to teach Frisian at a secondary modern school although there is no special course of instruction for this level. In Flensburg students are trained for the secondary modern and the intermediate school. The course of studies described for the primary-school level also applies to the intermediate-school level. There is no special course of instruction for secondary-modern level. Students here only study two subjects but they may choose a third supplementary one such as Frisian.

*university*

Frisian language and literature can be studied at the University of Kiel as a main and a subsidiary subject for the Masters Degree (M.A.) and the Doctorate (Dr. Phil.). Once the professor for Frisian Studies in Kiel retires in March 1997, the chair will become a chair of North-Sea-

Germanic Studies. Due to cuts in education, it is unknown how long the professorship will subsequently remain vacant. Following the retirement of the professor of Frisian Studies in Flensburg in September 1996, the chair was cut. Teaching can now only be provided here by means of part-time teaching assignments. In both locations the number of students enrolled for Frisian is quite small (between 5 and 10) but there is also a fair number who attend courses without actually studying the subject as such.

## 7

### Adult education

Increasing unemployment, the demand for greater mobility, a rapidly changing employment market and continuing developments in technology, information and communications systems provide a need for adult education and further training.

#### *structure*

Schleswig-Holstein proves an exception in Germany as it has no law pertaining explicitly to adult education. Thus reference has to be made to § 9 of the constitution which guarantees the right to adult education. The law "*Bildungs-, Freistellungs- und Qualifizierungsgesetz*" of June 7th, 1990 also recognizes the right to adult education and the institutions offering such education. All employees in Schleswig-Holstein are, for example, entitled to upto five days paid leave p.a. to participate in adult education courses. Adult education is provided by the "*Volkshochschulen*" (centres of adult education) and the "*Ortskulturring*" (local cultural associations) although the latter are restricted to the former Duchy of Schleswig. The "*Volkshochschulen*" are either run by the local municipality or they are private organizations recognized by the state (*eingetragener Verein*). They are principally financed by the "Land", the local district, the municipality and by participants' fees. An "*Ortskulturring*" is an organization consisting of the various cultural institutions in a small village. The courses offered generally refer to hobbies, health and languages.



- statistics* In Schleswig-Holstein there are 176 centres of adult education, of which 16 are situated in North Frisia. 280,854 people attended a large variety of courses in Schleswig-Holstein in 1995 of whom 10,823 (3,8%) were enrolled in North Frisia. There are approx. 40 "Ortskulturring" in the "Kreis Nordfriesland" and the same number in the "Kreis Schleswig-Flensburg".
- training sector* The training sector (*Berufsorientierte Weiterbildung an Volkshochschulen*) offers a wide range of courses (e.g. computers, commerce, languages and social work) with the possibility of gaining further qualifications.
- education sector* In the education sector it is possible to gain the school leaving certificate for intermediate and secondary modern schools as well as acquiring the right to attend a *Fachhochschule*.
- language use* German is generally used in all courses except in language courses where the target language may also be the medium.
- Frisian courses* Frisian courses are held by Frisian associations, the *Volkshochschule*, the *Ortskulturring*, and private individuals. In the winter of 1996/97 226 people took part in 18 language courses of which six were run by Frisian associations, three by *Volkshochschulen*, five by *Ortskulturring* (partly in conjunction with the Danish evening school), and four by private individuals.
- secondary school level* Another means of adult education are the evening classes at grammar school (*Abendgymnasium*) and secondary modern school level (*Abendrealschule*) leading to a higher school leaving certificate.
- Abendgymnasium* People who are over the age of 19 and who have been working for at least three years or who already have a professional qualification can attend evening classes at a grammar school. The courses usually last three, at the most four years and end with an examination for the school

leaving certificate for grammar schools (*Abiturprüfung*). Schools offering such courses are to be found in the small town of Heide as part of the district (*Kreis*) of Dithmarschen as well as in the larger towns (*kreisfreie Städte*) of Flensburg, Kiel and Lübeck. In the school year 1996-97 there were 430 pupils attending such classes. Frisian is not used in any of the courses.

### *Abendrealschule*

People who are gainfully employed can attend evening classes at a secondary modern school. The courses offered here usually last two, in exceptional cases three years. At the end of the courses pupils sit an examination to gain the school leaving certificate for secondary modern schools (*Realschulabschluss*). Schools offering such courses are to be found in the small town of Rendsburg as part of the district of Rendsburg-Eckernförde as well as in the larger towns of Flensburg, Kiel, Lübeck and Neumünster. In the school year 1996/97 there were 528 pupils attending such classes. Frisian is not used in any of the courses.

## 8

### **Educational research**

Apart from the very limited research in connection with the project mentioned under Frisian in kindergarten, the only research available on Frisian in education has been conducted by students in connection with a thesis.

## 9

### **Prospects**

#### *pre-school*

There are encouraging signs that parents and the Frisian associations have now recognized the need for Frisian at the pre-school level and that further groups may be founded.

#### *primary and secondary*

One problem facing Frisian in primary and secondary education is the dearth of qualified teachers. Thus the future of Frisian Studies at the Universities of Kiel and Flensburg will partly determine the future of Frisian in school.

On a more encouraging note, the initiatives being taken by the IPTS work-group for Frisian the past few years are providing a more solid base for the subject and are actively motivating the teachers.

*vocational and adult*

There are no signs that Frisian will be included in vocational education. Frisian would, however, appear to play a more positive role in adult education as the Frisian courses seem to be growing in popularity.

*higher*

The future of Frisian in higher education is uncertain. At the University of Kiel it is not as yet clear what role Frisian will play in connection with the new chair for North-Sea-Germanic Studies. Quite independent of the department's actual teaching and research, the word *Frisian* has now disappeared from its name.

In Flensburg it is uncertain if and when the full professorship for Frisian will be reinstated as the general economic climate is deteriorating.

## 10

### Summary statistics

Type of education	number of schools in North Frisia	Enrolment
Pre-school	97	4,647
Primary	69	7,151
Special	10	669
General Secondary	60	10,206
Secondary Vocational	21	6,584
Outside North Frisia		
Higher Colleges	(8)	(16,000)
Universities	(3)	(26,000)

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Education system in Germany: *Structures of the Education*

## Notes

- 1 Source: European charter for regional or minority languages. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. November 1992. European Treaty Series/Série des traités européens 148.
- 2 This document called "*Structures of the education and initial training systems in the European Union*" has been prepared jointly by EURYDICE and CEDEFOP. Website: (partly also in French) <http://www.eurydice.org>. Tel.: +32-2-238 3011; Fax. +32-2-230 6562. Address: EURYDICE European Unit, Rue d'Arlon 15, 1050 Brussels, Belgium.
- 3 It should be noted that this is an estimate as the last survey encompassing the whole of the Frisian-speaking area dates from 1927, see Johannsen (1929).

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