Teachers in Europe: main trends, issues and challenges

Vlasta Vizek Vidovic

Centre for educational research and development,
Institute of social research in Zagreb, Croatia

EFA, 28 - 29 November 2012 Windhoek (Namibia)

"The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers."

Barber and Mourshed (2007)

EUROPE: Key actors, key milestones, key sources 2000-2012

Key actors:
- EU commission & EU Council
- European network on teacher education policy (ENTEP)
- Teacher education policy in Europe network (TEPE)
- European trade union committee for education (ETUCE)
- Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE)

Key milestones:
- Green Paper on Teacher Education in Europe (Buchberger, 2000)
- Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications (EC 2005).
- Conclusions on improving the quality of teacher education (EC 2007)

Key sources:
- Eurydice, Eurypedia

Key issues

- Teacher selection and retention
- Teacher competences and profiles
- Teacher initial education
- Induction and continuous professional development
- Teacher quality assurance

Mainstream school teachers in focus!

Selection and retention

Key trends:

- Entrance criteria to ITE – variety of selection procedures
- Aging of teacher population – specially at secondary school level
- Shortage of teachers in some countries and subjects
- Early retirement of majority of teachers

Key challenges:

- Attracting highly capable individuals to ITE and profession
- Balancing demand and supply
- Limited career possibilites
- Keeping committed and most competent in profession
- Protecting working conditions in face of economic crisis

Teacher competences and profiles

Key trends:

- Development and/or refinement of teacher competence frameworks, standards and profiles

- Multiple utilization of standards for curricula development, licensing procedures, teacher advancement, mobility

Key challenges:

- Harmonization of key teacher competences across Europe

- European teacher profile development

- Balancing between standardization and enhancement of professional autonomy and inovativeness

Teacher initial education

Key trends

- Universitation of initial education (MA, PhD, research)
- Competence based curricula with focus on learning outcomes
- Broadening the scope of themes (e.g. education for diversity, sustainable development, citizenship)
- Student - centred approaches to teaching and learning

Key challenges

- Dualism between ITE for primary and secondary level
- Constructive alignment of curricula components
- Balance between university and school based approach to ITE
- Educating teacher educators

Induction and professional development

Key trends:

- Growing implementation of formal induction
- Professional development as teachers' duty and right
- Based on teachers' need assessment
- Mixed approaches (provided in and outside schools)
- Variety of providers (e.g. universities, NGO-s, agencies)

Key challenges:

- Support to school-based mentors
- Establishment of professional development continuum
- Certification and recognition for promotion
- Accreditation of programs and providers
- Evaluation of effects: monitoring and follow up

Teacher quality assurance

Key trends:

- Quality assurance mechanisms developed in HE cover ITE
- Quality assurance mechanisms in CPD developing slowly
- Licencing and promotion as part of QA (professional registers)
- Reflection on one's own professional quality as a basis for professional development (teacher portfolios)

Key challenges:

- Teachers ownership of quality through individual and school involvement (learning communities)
- Professional teacher bodies strengthening
- Common understanding of quality indicators among stakeholders
- Shared responsibilities & shared trust (government, schools leaders, teacher eductors and teachers)

... New issue leading to new challenges:

Should teaching become a regulated profession?

Thank you for your attention!