Teachers in Europe: main trends, issues and challenges

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

Barber and Moursheed (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 possibilities
• 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 innovativeness
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 educators and teachers)
... New issue leading to new challenges:

*Should teaching become a regulated profession?*

Thank you for your attention!