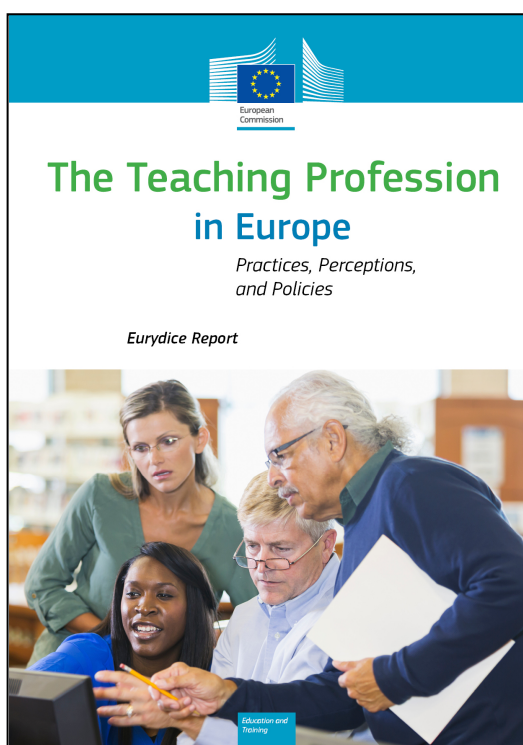


What is Eurydice?

The Eurydice network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is co-ordinated by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. For more information about Eurydice, see <http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice>

Eurydice Highlights

The Teaching Profession in Europe: Practices, Perceptions, and Policies



Is the teaching profession an attractive career choice nowadays? What are teachers' working conditions? How are teachers trained for their job? Is transnational mobility popular among them?

The European Commission and the Council of the European Union have recently emphasised the need to improve teachers' education, strengthen their continuing professional development, and enhance the attractiveness of the profession ⁽¹⁾. In this context, the Eurydice report 'The Teaching Profession in Europe: Practices, Perceptions, and Policies' analyses the relation between the policies that regulate the teaching profession, and the attitudes, practices, and perceptions of teachers. The report focuses on almost two million lower secondary education (ISCED 2) teachers employed

in the 28 Member States, as well as in Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, and Turkey. It is based on Eurydice and Eurostat/UOE data, as well as on a secondary analysis of TALIS 2013 ⁽²⁾, combining qualitative and quantitative evidence.

This 'Eurydice Highlights' provides a snapshot of some of the most important findings of the report, with a special focus on the transition from education to the teaching profession, continuing professional development, transnational mobility, teacher demographics, and working conditions.

Full report

The Teaching Profession in Europe: Practices, Perceptions, and Policies can be found in English on the Eurydice website <http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice>

Printed copies of the report are available upon request at: eacea-eurydice@ec.europa.eu

Contact

Wim Vansteenkiste,
Communication and Publications:
+32 2 299 50 58

⁽¹⁾ Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020')

⁽²⁾ <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/talis-2013-results.htm>

The teaching profession employs mainly women, and there may be shortages of professionals in the near future

Women currently outnumber men teachers by far, and the proportion of men is decreasing. Even in countries that show a better balance between genders, there are nowadays fewer men enrolling in the profession than before.

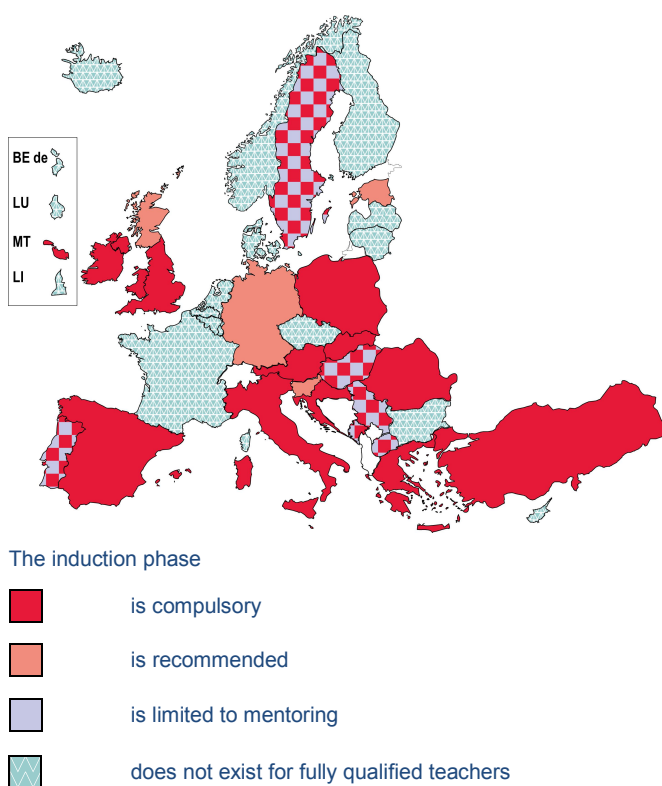
At European level, two-thirds of teachers are over 40 years old and around 40 % will be retiring in the next 15 years. Without policies that enhance recruitment, in some countries, the ageing teaching population may lead to shortages of professionals.

In almost two-thirds of the European countries, fully qualified first-time teachers have access to a structured induction phase

There is broad consensus that the transition from education to professional life is a crucial period for newly qualified teachers. This period should strengthen their competences and confidence, and reduce the risk of abandoning the profession early. In almost two-thirds of the countries, newly fully qualified teachers working in public schools have access to a structured induction phase with additional training, personalised help, and advice. This specific support usually lasts one year and may include different types of activities, such as mentoring, scheduled meetings with the school head and/or colleagues, as well as peer review. When an induction phase exists, it is most often compulsory. This induction phase is offered in addition to the professional training provided during the initial teacher education, and it usually ends with an evaluation. In France and Luxembourg, which hold competitive examinations during initial teacher education, the induction phase with remunerated teaching activities is organised during the professional training.

Across Europe, only six education systems have at least 60 % of their younger teachers reporting that they had taken part in an induction programme. This proportion is highest in the United Kingdom (England) and Bulgaria.

Status of the induction phase for fully qualified first-time teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2), according to central regulations, 2013/14



Source: Eurydice.

Almost all newly fully qualified teachers receive mentoring support in their first job

Although not all countries offer a comprehensive, system-wide induction phase, mentoring support is available almost everywhere in Europe. In countries where the induction phase is compulsory for all fully qualified first-time teachers working in public education, mentoring is usually a required part of that phase. In Poland and in the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), first-time teachers benefit from mentoring support beyond the induction phase. Across the EU, the

proportion of teachers below 30 years of age reporting that they currently have a mentor is more than three times higher than the proportion of teachers between 30 and 39 years old. This confirms that mentoring is mainly considered as a support measure for first-time teachers. Mentoring is generally undertaken by more experienced teachers, often from a higher grade, and in some countries specific training and/or support are provided to teachers acting as mentors.

Teachers express higher professional development needs in teaching methods than in subject matter

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is at the heart of the European Union strategy for improving the quality of education. The analysis of teachers' needs in CPD shows that they feel prepared in the subject they are teaching but are seeking to diversify their teaching methods. Teachers are expressing CPD needs in areas that enable them to be more effective and modern, such as technology, and to enhance the potential of students.

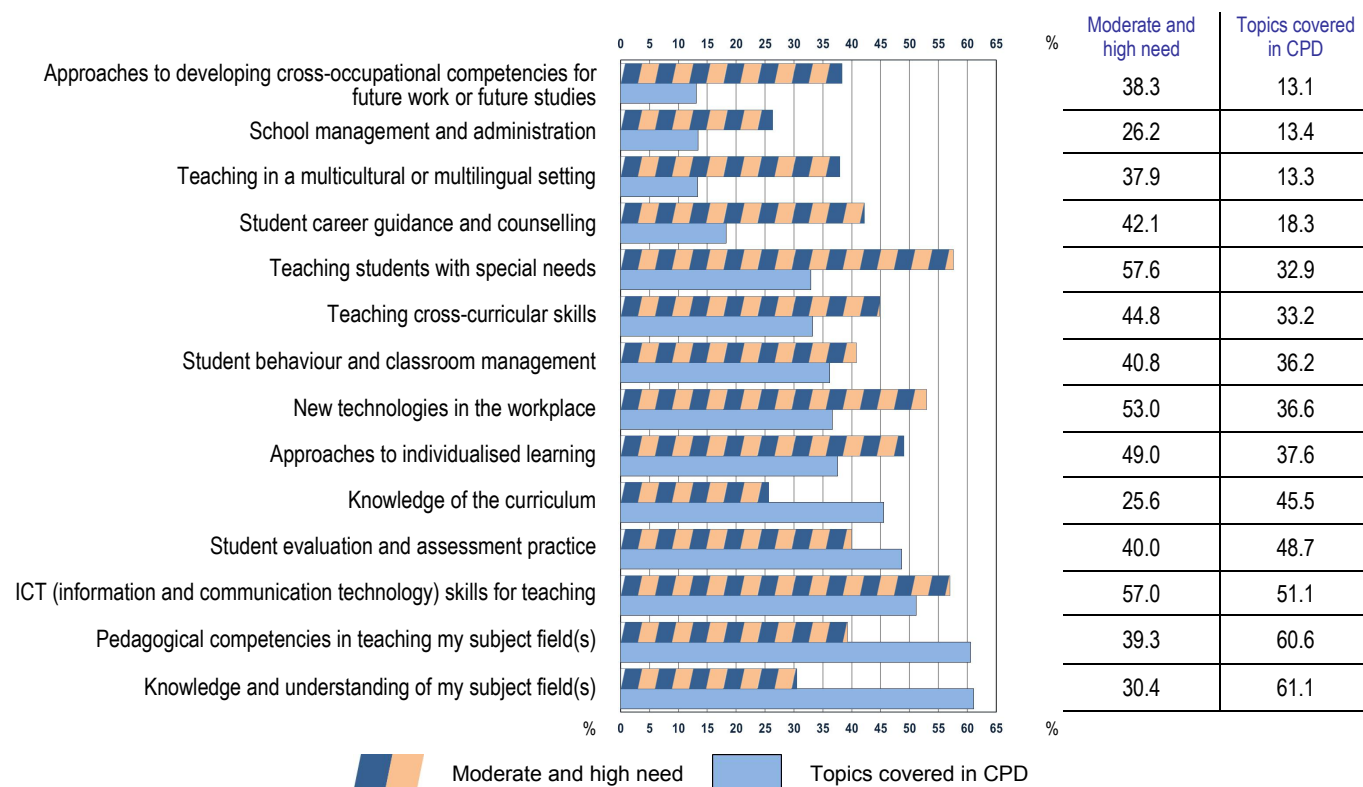
Over 50 % of teachers express moderate to high CPD needs in 'Teaching students with special needs', 'ICT skills for teaching', and 'New technologies in the workplace'. These are followed by 'Approaches to individualised learning', 'Teaching cross-curricular skills', and 'Student career guidance and counselling'.

The content of professional development activities does not always match the needs expressed by teachers

In most countries, CPD for teachers is a professional duty. However, there is often a mismatch between the professional development needs expressed by teachers, and the actual content of their CPD. Indeed, where needs are high, there is often too little related CPD content provided. For example, while 38 % of teachers expressed a moderate to high need to be trained in 'Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting', only around 13 % had this topic covered by their CPD. This mismatch can also be seen in the areas such as 'Student

career guidance and counselling', 'Teaching students with special needs', and 'Teaching cross-curricular skills'. Conversely, where there is a low level of needs among teachers, there is often a surplus of CPD opportunities. This can be seen in the cases of 'Knowledge of the curriculum' and 'Knowledge and understanding of my subject field(s)'. 'ICT skills for teaching' is among the very few topics where needs and provision seem to almost match.

Proportion of teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) declaring that their professional development activities covered specific topics in the 12 months prior to the survey, and proportion of teachers expressing moderate and high levels of need for professional development in the same topics, EU level, 2013



Source: Eurydice, based on OECD, TALIS 2013.

Voicing teachers' needs for professional development could better align the offer

In some countries, the top-level public authority in education defines the content of teachers' CPD, while in others its intervention is limited to the areas of reform. Interestingly, in countries where more teachers express higher professional development needs, there is also more often an intervention of the top-level education authority in defining CPD provision.

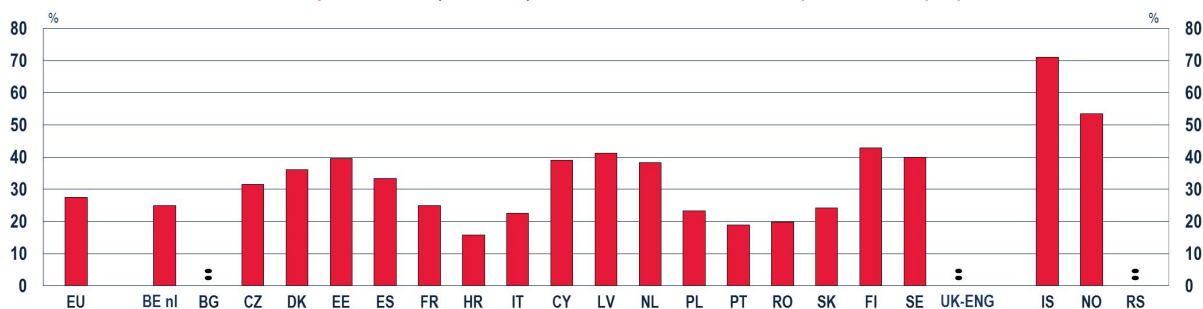
This indicates a relation between teachers' perception of needs and the nation-wide policies in the field of CPD. Therefore, the way in which CPD content is determined could benefit from a closer cooperation between top-level authorities, schools, and teachers, ensuring that teachers' voice is fully acknowledged and heard.

Less than one-third of teachers have been abroad for professional purposes

At EU level, 27 % of teachers have been abroad at least once for professional purposes. As can be seen from the figure below, the proportion is highest in Nordic and Baltic countries. In all countries surveyed, except Iceland, modern foreign language teachers are the most mobile ones compared to teachers in social studies, reading, writing and literature; science and mathematics. For teachers of a modern foreign language, more than others, transnational mobility seems to be a professional

need during both the initial and continuing professional development. At EU level, more than half of modern foreign language teachers have been abroad for professional purposes. This opportunity gives them the chance to practise the language they teach and to gain a deeper cultural insight to transmit to their pupils. However, at EU level, more than 40 % of modern foreign language teachers surveyed reported that they had never been abroad for professional purposes.

Proportion of teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who have been abroad for professional purposes, 2013



Source: Eurydice, based on OECD, TALIS 2013.

The Erasmus+ programme is the main funding scheme for teacher transnational mobility

In the EU, the main funding scheme for teacher transnational mobility is Erasmus+ (2014-2020), the EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport. Through this programme, both graduating and practising teachers may get mobility grants to engage in studies or professional development abroad, and may also get involved in transnational projects entailing their mobility.

Almost a quarter of 'mobile teachers' went abroad for professional purposes under the EU programme, compared to a tenth in the case of national or regional programmes.

National top-level schemes to support teacher mobility also exist in over half of all European countries, mainly in western and northern Europe.

Many factors are to be considered to evaluate the attractiveness of the teaching profession

Working conditions such as employment status, salaries, working hours can differ rather sharply across Europe. Some of these conditions can affect teachers' job satisfaction and their view of how society values them.

Moreover, the report shows that these perceptions can be influenced by environmental factors such as teacher/student relation, collaboration among teachers, as well as feedback and appraisal systems.

The full report *The Teaching Profession in Europe: Practices, Perceptions, and Policies* can be found in English on the Eurydice website:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:The_Teaching_Profession_in_Europe:_Practices,_Perceptions,_and_Policies

See also *Teachers and Education Staff*: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Teachers_and_Education_Staff