

Communications from the European Commission on

**1) Improving Competences for the 21st century
an agenda for European cooperation on
schools**

2) Improving the Quality of Teacher Education

Regional seminar on teacher training for inclusive education
in countries with diverse social and cultural contexts
28-29 May 2009, Zagreb, Croatia

Background

- 2002/2003 EU Work Programme «Education and Training 2010»
5 Benchmarks for improving education and training systems
- 2006 Recommendation «Key competences for lifelong learning»
Communication on Efficiency and Equity
- 2007 Communication/Council Conclusions on Teacher Education
- 2008 Communication/Council Conclusions Improving
Competences for the 21st century

Background: EU-Cooperation 2002-2008

- *High quality systems*
- *Improved access to E&T systems for all*
- *Opening up E&T systems to the wider world*

Working groups 2001-2004

8 Clusters on key policy areas: access and social inclusion, teachers & trainers, key competences, ...

2007 Public consultation on schools

Development of indicators, e.g. for learning to learn

Only slow progress towards EU-Benchmarks...

- Reading literacy: 24.1% low achievers (target 17%)
- Early school leavers: 14.8% (target 10%)
- Upper secondary completion: 78.1% (target 85%)

1) Commission Communication *“Improving the quality of Teacher Training”*

Council of the EU, Nov. 2006:

“the motivation, skills and competences of teachers, trainers, and other teaching staff ... are key factors in achieving high quality learning outcomes”

- **Increase European cooperation in the field of teacher training**

Changing demands on the teaching profession...

- help acquiring key competences, autonomous learning, instead of memorizing information
- more collaborative learning approaches
- teacher as facilitator
- more heterogeneity
- new technologies

... require

- ➔ high quality initial training
- ➔ continuous professional development

Skills shortages and limited training provision

- Lack of competence to deal with new developments
- Weak incentives for teachers to update their skills (in-service training compulsory in only 11 EU-Member States)
- Lack of support for novice teachers
- Low investment in continuous training

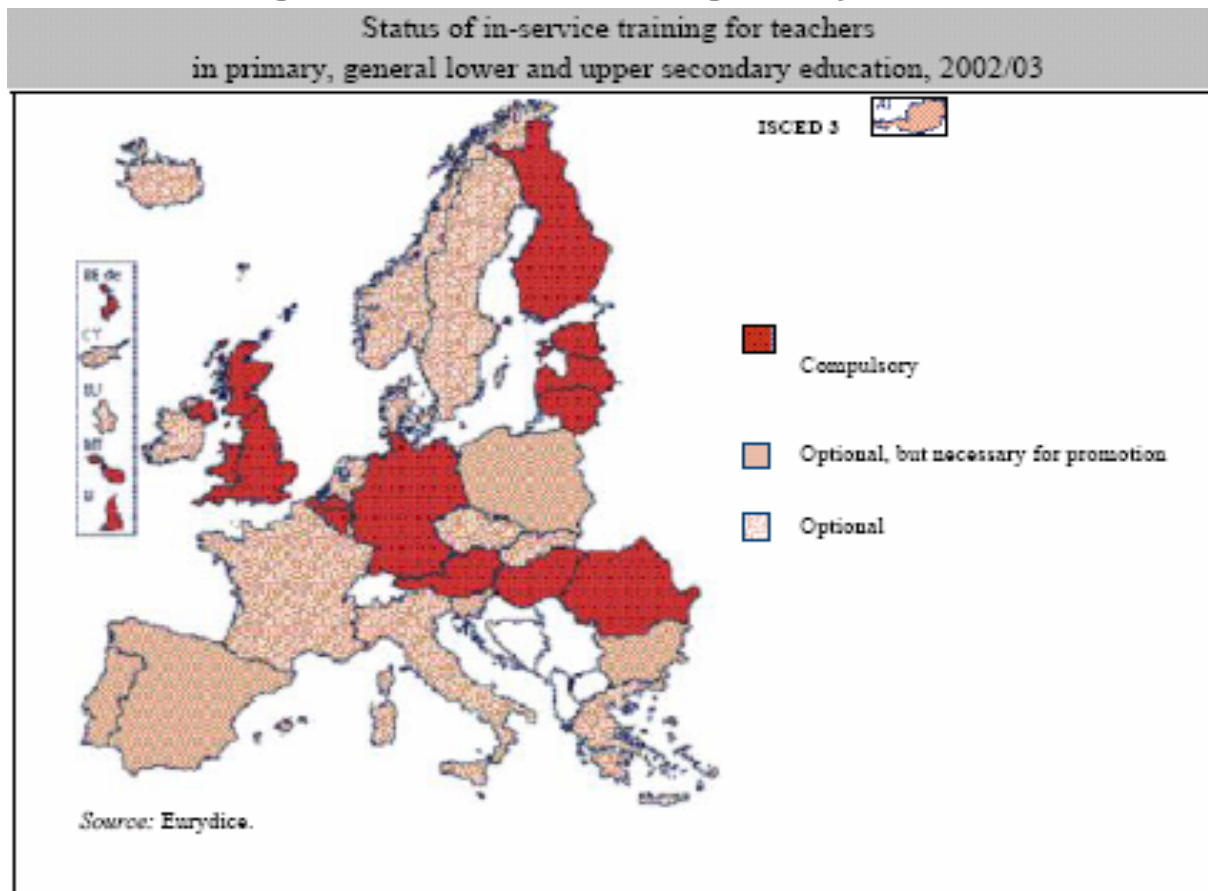


Table 2 below shows that the minimum annual time allocation for compulsory in-service training varies by country.

Minimum annual time allocation (in hours) for compulsory in-service training in primary, general lower and upper secondary education, 2002/03

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	DE	EE	LV	LT	HU	MT	AT	FI	UK-ENG/ WLS/NIR	UK- SCT	LI	RO
ISCED 1	21	21	14	v	32	12	18	17	21	15	18	v	35	v	19
ISCED 2	21	21	21		32	12	18	17	21	15	18		35		19
ISCED 3	21	21	21		32	12	18	17	21	4	18		35		19
x	CZ, DK, EL, ES, FR, IE, IT, CY, LU, NL, PL, PT, SI, SK, SE, IS, NO and BG.														

Characteristics and structures of the teaching profession

- Gender
- Remuneration affects supply
- Age

Aims:

- Make teaching an attractive career choice, in order to recruit the best candidates and attract people to switch careers in favour of teaching
- Recruit sufficient numbers of men and women to replace age cohorts in decline

A Framework for Action

EU support for the modernisation of teacher training:

- Funds (LLL-Programme, ESF)
- Joint work with Member States (Peer Learning, etc.)
- Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications

Common principles

- **A common vision of a European teaching profession:**
 - a well qualified profession
 - a profession of lifelong learners
 - a mobile profession
 - a profession based on partnership

Common principles

➤ **The Commission's policy suggestions:**

- lifelong learning
 - effective programmes of induction during first 3 years in post
 - access to guidance and mentoring
 - discussion of training and development needs
- Support to extend and develop competences
- Access to other opportunities for development (exchanges, placements, ...)
- Time to study for further qualifications
- Creative partnerships with world of work, higher education, research

Common principles

Necessary skills:

- Identify needs of individual learners
- Support development into autonomous learners
- Help to acquire Key Competences
- Work in multicultural settings
- Work in collaboration with colleagues, parents, wider community

Reflective practice and research

- Classroom –based research
- Make use of results of research in teaching
- Evaluation of teaching strategies
- Assess own training needs

Common principles

Qualifications:

- Move initial training to a higher qualification level (University level)

Teacher Education in Higher Education

- Make teacher education available in Master and Doctorate cycles of higher education
- Partnerships of HE institutions with schools

Teaching in society

- Profession should reflect diversity of society
- Remove obstacles to culture and gender balance

The Commission's contribution

- Support MS through LLL-Programme and ESF, encourage mobility
- Development of indicators
- Creation and dissemination of new knowledge
- Support initiatives that promote the European dimension and mobility teachers
- Review progress

Council conclusions

Endeavour to ensure that teachers

- hold a qualification from a higher education institution
- possess specialist knowledge of their subjects, as well as the pedagogical skills required
- have access to effective early career support programmes and to adequate mentoring support
- Are encouraged and supported throughout their careers to review their learning needs

Ensure

- Training in management and leadership for school leaders
- provision for teachers' initial education, early career support and further professional development is coordinated, coherent, adequately resourced and quality assured.
- measures aimed at raising the level of qualifications and the degree of practical experience required for employment as a teacher
- Closer links and partnerships between schools and teacher training institutions

Council conclusions

- Promote during initial teacher education, early career support and through continuous professional development the acquisition of competences which enable teachers to:
 - teach transversal competences such as those outlined in the Recommendation on key competences,
 - create a safe and attractive school environment which is based on mutual respect and cooperation,
 - teach effectively in heterogeneous classes of pupils from diverse social and cultural backgrounds and with a wide range of abilities and needs, including special education needs,
 - work in close collaboration with colleagues, parents and the wider community,
 - participate in the development of the school or training centre in which they are employed,
 - develop new knowledge and be innovative through engagement in reflective practice and research,
 - make use of ICT in their various tasks, as well as in their own continuing professional development,
 - become autonomous learners in their own career-long professional development.

- Provide support for teacher education institutions and teacher educators, so as to enable these to develop innovative responses to the new demands on teacher education.
- Support mobility programmes for teachers, student teachers
- and teacher educators
- Take any appropriate steps to make the teaching profession a more attractive career choice.

2) Improving Competences for the 21st century an agenda for European cooperation on schools

Purpose of the Communication

- **strengthen reform** of school systems in Member States
- **support Member States** by facilitating exchange of information and good practice ..
- .. and through Lifelong Learning Programme.
focus on common challenges that are best tackled by **cooperation**

Three parts:

A. Focus on Competences

**B. High quality education
for every student**

**C. Teachers and schools
staff**

A. Focus on Competences

Implementing key competences

- European Framework of 8 Key Competences
- knowledge + skills, attitudes to apply it in real life
- 'learning to learn', reflectivity
- manage own learning, work autonomously
- collaborate

Curricular reform needed

- organise learning across subjects
- teach competences explicitly
- new didactics
- involve stakeholders

Focus on Competences

Literacy large numbers of low achievers... tackle through

- family literacy policies
- specialist support from pre-primary on
- national literacy strategies and targets
- better infrastructure

Personalised learning

- more personalised teaching -> improving competences
- identify individual difficulties early
- prevention strategies
- specific teacher training
- more flexible education and training pathways

Focus on Competences

Assessing learning outcomes

- design assessment to promote learning
- use formative assessment to identify / address problems
- develop summative assessment techniques
- agreed standards for learning outcomes

Focus on Competences

Key Proposals for Cooperation

- implement Recommendation on Key Competences
- action plans on reading literacy and numeracy
- reinforce transversal competences, esp. learning-to-learn
- comprehensive approach to competences:
 - curricula, materials
 - teacher training
 - personalised learning
 - assessment techniques

B. High quality learning for every student

Better early learning

- social and emotional care, as well as teaching
- specialist trained staff
- early, intensive, multi-systemic approach

aims: childcare for 90% between 3 years and school age
33% of under 3-year-olds

System equity

- early tracking can exacerbate differences in attainment due to social background.
- year repetition is expensive and ineffective
- high expectations for all pupils
- no 'failure' is definitive
- flexible learning pathways

High quality learning for every student

Early School Leaving

wasted potential: costs to individual, society, economy

- reinforce newcomers' competences
- identify those 'at risk' early
- parent / teacher collaboration
- after-school learning activities
- continuity of support in transition
- make schools more attractive

Special Needs

Students with special needs favour inclusive education

- inclusive approaches benefit all
- avoid transfer to segregated settings:
 - re-think policies for organising learning support
 - improve collaboration between schools & other services
 - implement personalised learning

High quality learning for every student

School development

need to adapt continuously to changing environment

- school inspection can support improvement
- systemic, cyclical self-evaluation
- develop 'learning communities'
- school networking
- autonomy – need to assess benefits

High quality learning for every student

Key Proposals for Cooperation

- implement Council Conclusions on efficiency and equity
- generalise access to quality pre-school education
- measure, improve system equity; reduce quality differences between schools
- facilitate successful transitions
- reduce early school leaving
- support students with special needs in mainstream schooling

C. Teachers and school staff

Teacher Competences and Qualifications

- most important school factor affecting student performance
- 30% aged over 50; > 2 mio. to retire in next 15 years
- shortfalls in teaching skills:
 - weak incentives, low investment in training and development
 - minimal time spent on in-service training
 - often no systematic support for new teachers

- the best systems:
 - attract most able into teaching profession
 - select right applicants
 - tackle poor performance
 - career-long teacher education
 - teachers learn from each other at school

Teachers and school staff

School Leadership

- schools are complex - need effective leadership
- distributed leadership improves school effectiveness
- leaders to focus on improving student learning (not admin.)
- need training throughout careers
- need professional recruitment and retention strategies

Teachers and school staff

Key Proposals for Cooperation

- implement Council Conclusions on quality of Teacher Education
- make Teacher Education coherent, adequately resourced, quality assured
- improve supply, quality and take-up of in-service Teacher Educ.
- attract most able candidates, select best applicants, place good teachers in challenging schools
- improve school leader recruitment, let them focus on improving learning and developing school staff

Conclusions

- **strengthen cooperation on school education policy**
- **make school systems more relevant to future needs**
 - higher quality schooling
 - more equitable systems
- **give all pupils competences for life**
 - key competences
 - increase levels of literacy, numeracy
- **high quality learning for every student**
 - generalise pre-school education
 - reduce early school leaving
 - support in mainstream schools for students with special needs
- **improve quality of teachers / other staff**
 - more and better teacher education
 - more effective teacher recruitment
 - help school leaders focus on improving learning

What can Member States do with it?

- Broad policy guidelines
- Based on evidence, objectivity
- Take into account in national reform plannings
- Engage in cooperation with other countries