



*Key topics  
in education in Europe*

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**VOLUME 3**

**THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN EUROPE:  
PROFILE, TRENDS AND CONCERNS**

**Supplementary report**

**Reforms of the teaching profession:  
a historical survey (1975-2002)**

**GENERAL LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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**EURYDICE**

European Unit

Avenue Louise 240

B-1050 Brussels

Tel. +32 2 600 53 53

Fax +32 2 600 53 63

E-mail: [info@eurydice.org](mailto:info@eurydice.org)

Internet: <http://www.eurydice.org>

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## INTRODUCTION

Eurydice has produced an in-depth study of the teaching profession in general lower secondary education as part of its *Key topics in education in Europe* series. The first three reports in this four-part study examine initial teacher education and transition to working life, supply and demand, and working conditions and pay. The fourth and final report takes a broader look at 'keeping teaching attractive for the 21st century' <sup>(1)</sup>. Tables describing the main reforms in the profession in each country were also prepared from reports drafted by national experts and published on the Eurydice website ([www.eurydice.org](http://www.eurydice.org)) <sup>(2)</sup>.

The purpose of this overview is to outline and analyse the development of the teaching profession in Europe in recent decades. It is based on the information contained in the national reform tables mentioned above. These tables show changes to the profession that are considered to be reasonably representative by the national experts. Neither those tables nor this overview claim to be exhaustive, but should instead be read as a short description of the most important changes affecting the profession and – above all – as an investigation into their aims and context.

The reference period covered by the overview is 1975 to 2002 <sup>(3)</sup>. The main subjects discussed are the major topics dealt with in detail in the four above-mentioned reports <sup>(4)</sup>.

Reform is taken here to mean any legislation, standard or measure irrespective of its source, status or nature (law, decree, etc.), which alters one or several aspects of the teaching profession.

Broader reforms affecting groups of workers to which teachers (among others) happen to belong were also considered by some experts to be relevant. An example is that of reforms of public administration in countries in which teachers are public servants.

Many countries have very decentralised education systems. However, coverage of all measures devised at regional, local or school levels would be too complex an undertaking and consequently, only reforms implemented on a national scale or within the remit of the central or top-level authorities for education have been considered here. In Sweden, for example, schools have been managed by local authorities for many years now. They are very autonomous, which means that the role of central administration is lessened. There are therefore few reforms reported by the Swedish national expert.

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<sup>(1)</sup> See 'The Teaching Profession in Europe: profile, trends and concerns. *Key Topics in Education in Europe*, Volume 3. Report I: Initial training and transition to working life. General lower secondary education. Brussels: Eurydice, 2002 (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/fr/FrameSet1.htm>), Report II: Supply and demand. General lower secondary education. Brussels: Eurydice, 2002 (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/fr/FrameSet2.htm>), Report III: Working conditions and pay, General lower secondary education. Brussels: Eurydice, 2003 (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/fr/FrameSet3.htm>) and Report IV: Keeping teaching attractive for the 21st century. General lower secondary education. Brussels: Eurydice, 2004 (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/fr/FrameSet4.htm>).

<sup>(2)</sup> National tables on the reforms of teaching profession: <http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KT3tables/en/FrameSet.html>. The information for the Flemish Community of Belgium, Ireland and Bulgaria is not available.

<sup>(3)</sup> National tables include a few 1974 reforms considered to be especially relevant to a proper understanding of the position of teachers in some countries.

<sup>(4)</sup> They correspond to initial teacher education; recruitment; employment status and job security; working time, duties and professional codes; salaries and promotion; in-service training; support for teachers and their appraisal.

## 1. MAIN TRENDS

Teacher education has unquestionably been subject to major changes, focused above all on **initial teacher education**. Salaries, promotion, working time, duties and codes of practice, and professional ethics comprise a second group of issues addressed by reforms during the reference period. By contrast, there have been fewer reforms in the employment status and job security of teachers, the support offered them, or the way they are recruited and evaluated in any of the countries studied. In terms of its priorities, the pattern of reform has remained much the same throughout the three decades.

From 1990 onwards, all European countries appeared to have initiated a process of considerable change in the teaching profession, except in Cyprus, Luxembourg and Romania. This applies just as much to the European Union Member States prior to enlargement (EU-15) and the EFTA/EEA countries as to the new Member States and candidate countries. The very big rise in the total number of reforms since 1990 is thus only partly attributable to a 'transition effect' in most new Member States and candidate countries, corresponding to the impact on reform of radical changes in their former socialist systems.

The situation in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) merits closer examination, given the scale of their reforms compared to those in other countries

In the Netherlands, the drive to overcome teacher shortage has been responsible for the main changes introduced. This shortage appears to have been primarily due to the lack of professional prospects for teachers, particularly from the financial standpoint. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) exposed management of their education systems to the influence of free market mechanisms, in order to encourage competition between schools and increase the scope for recruiting professionals other than qualified teachers.

In the **Netherlands**, many reforms were concerned with the salaries of teachers and procedures for promoting them, as well as initial teacher education. Following the economic crises of 1973 and 1979, public policy in this country sought to reduce expenditure on education. Between 1979 and 1985, therefore, several measures were adopted to decrease teacher salaries. These budgetary restrictions led to a shortage of teachers. Subsequently, some measures had to be introduced to counter this shortage, by increasing salaries but also by offering older teachers financial incentives to remain in service for a longer period, but with a reduced teaching load, etc.

Meanwhile, from the 1980s onwards, an effort was made to raise the requirements of initial teacher education, broadening the range of skills covered and ensuring better quality provision. Then from 1998 onwards, this strategy was to some extent reversed. The new curriculum reduced the number of skills required on completion of initial teacher education but in-service training became an official duty in the belief that it could compensate for an initially lower skills level.

In 1999, the *Maatwerk voor Morgen* memorandum clearly stated the main aim of the new policies, namely to reduce teacher shortage by applying market mechanisms to education. Since 2000, for example, the teaching profession has been open to persons with professional experience in other sectors.

In the **United Kingdom (England and Wales)**, there was a trend towards increasing central control of initial teacher training, by, for example, defining the content of training courses and/or the professional standards required of qualified teachers and by introducing inspection arrangements. Teachers' salaries and their conditions of employment also came under the direct control of the Secretary of State following the passing of *The Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act 1987*.

This increase in central control must however be seen in the context of the decentralisation of financial and other decision-making powers from local education authorities to the governing bodies of individual schools. The *Education Reform Act 1988* transferred responsibility for determining the staffing complement of the school and for

recruitment and other personnel functions to schools. There was an openly declared commitment to encouraging the creation of a market in which schools would compete with each other to recruit the best teachers and enrol the greatest numbers of pupils.

Other important reforms increased the influence of schools over the training process and introduced more flexible routes into teaching. Financial incentives to make training to become a teacher more attractive were also introduced.

The trend towards developing a market economy in the education sector in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) stands in contrast to the situation in France. Traditionally, education in the latter country has been the preserve of central government, a situation which in principle is incompatible with market mechanisms. The numerous reforms in this country have above all sought to establish new teacher education institutions.

In **France**, as in many countries, the reforms in the teaching profession related mainly to education and especially in-service training. They were concerned primarily with the establishment in 1982 of the *Missions Académiques à la Formation du Personnel de l'Éducation Nationale* (MAPFENs, or *Académie* Units for National Education Staff Training). Their goal was to organise local in-service training activities on an autonomous basis. The initial autonomy of the MAPFENs was restricted on several occasions and their responsibilities were transferred back to the central authorities prior to their dissolution in 1998. Another key development was the establishment in 1989 of the *Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres* (IUFMs, or University Teacher Education Institutes). Several successive reforms occurred as a direct consequence of the new IUFMs whose role, degree of autonomy and curricular content – which came to include in-service training once the MAPFENs were dismantled – had to be determined as time went by.

In **Austria**, teacher education (and particularly initial teacher education) has been one of the main issues underlying new legislation.

Between 1975 and 1988 in **Austria**, the structure of education was reformed, the period of initial teacher education was extended for those intending to work in *Hauptschulen*, and a professional dimension and final 'on-the-job' qualifying phase were built into the system (for *allgemein bildende höhere Schulen* teachers), while compulsory in-service training was reinforced. Between 1997 and 2000, initial teacher education was affected by a second raft of reforms. Its level was raised and its content updated. Meanwhile, the workload of teachers was increased during the reference period. Their range of duties was gradually extended and a broad definition of working time introduced (in 2001).

In some countries, reforms generally reflect an ongoing tension between several aims. For example, major legislative changes may often be attributed to an underlying inconsistency between controlling expenditure and the need to enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession, particularly in terms of pay.

The traditional dividing line between centralisation and decentralisation is of considerable significance in this respect.

Throughout the reference period as a whole, decentralisation measures were the more widespread, especially from 1990 onwards. All such reforms were mainly concerned with initial and in-service teacher education and to a lesser extent salaries and promotion, in a way consistent with the general trend.

In **Romania**, decentralisation has occurred very recently and remains limited. The centralisation of the system associated with the former regime was still in evidence in 1995. It was only from 1999 onwards that institutions were granted a certain degree of financial and curricular independence. Whether reforms currently seek to centralise or decentralise depends on the areas concerned. Thus proposals seeking to limit the share of the curriculum determined by schools are still subject to discussion, whereas financial decentralisation appears to have become more firmly entrenched.

For some years, the overriding trend in Europe has been to bring teachers closer to their employers and the authorities responsible for teacher education. In most cases, this decentralisation has occurred down to the level of schools and teacher education institutions. Thus the latter have often acquired considerable autonomy as far as freedom to determine the curriculum and content of training are concerned.

In the **United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)**, the situation is slightly different: *school governing bodies* and schools have clearly acquired responsibilities, in line with the general trend, but so too have the central authorities at the expense of the *local education authorities* and institutions for initial teacher education.

Similarly, in some countries, schools have taken on the responsibility of recruiting their own teaching staff, as in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Sweden, Finland and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). In Italy, teachers on a fixed term contract are also employed by schools, whereas those on a permanent contract may sign their contract with their school head, although they are always employed by the *Centri Servizi Amministrativi*<sup>(5)</sup>. In the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the Netherlands, Hungary, Slovenia and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) schools may also plan their in-service teacher education.

In **Italy** and **Iceland**, reforms that have decentralised responsibility for employing teachers have been followed by an increase in teaching time. However, it is hard to say whether these two developments are directly related. In Italy, decentralisation was linked to the privatisation of contracts, which may have been indirectly responsible for the increase in teacher workload.

In **Denmark, Finland** and **Sweden**, decentralisation was extended to the local authority level which may in turn decentralise its responsibilities to schools.

## 2. REFORMS IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education – and particularly initial teacher education – has thus been the subject of major reforms in all countries examined, although to a slightly lesser extent in Estonia, Italy and the Netherlands than elsewhere.

Changes in initial teacher education have affected several fields, including admission requirements, structure, length and level of education, course content, institutional autonomy, professional training and quality standards, etc.

In all countries, the **content of initial teacher education** has been the focus of big changes, mainly since the 1990s. Content has been reformed in 18 countries and – in the Czech Republic, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Iceland – on several occasions.

In the **Czech Republic**, changes in the content of initial teacher education occurred in 1976 and 1990. In 1976, as a delayed after-effect of the invasion of the country by the Soviet army following the 'Prague Spring', the new communist party directives and the ensuing legislation totally transformed the education system. Centralisation, loss of autonomy and ideological dominance were characteristic of these reforms at all levels, including initial teacher education.

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<sup>(5)</sup> See the Teaching profession in Europe: profile, trends and concerns. Report IV: Keeping teaching attractive for the 21st century. General lower secondary education. *Key topics in education in Europe*, Volume 3. Brussels: Eurydice, 2004, p. 44 (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/fr/FrameSet4.htm>).

With effect from 1990, this situation changed radically. Initial teacher education institutions became autonomous, centrally prescribed curricula were abandoned and changes in methodology and content occurred, especially in subjects such as history, Czech language and literature, philosophy instruction and civics, and psychology. Similarly, new subjects, including information and communication technology, institutional management and communications, were introduced. The system thereby adjusted to the principles of pluralist democracy and a market economy.

Countries such as Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and Iceland have simultaneously reformed the **content** and **structure** of initial teacher education for those intending to work in general lower secondary education.

In many countries institutions of initial teacher education gained greater freedom to define the curriculum during the reference period. However, this increased autonomy was often accompanied or followed by regulations to establish or ensure compliance with national and international quality standards.

Another change characteristic of the period was to **extend the duration of initial teacher education**. Most reforms with this in view occurred between 1975 and 1989. By contrast, between 1990 and 1999, there was a slight reversal of this trend as a result of policies to overcome teacher shortages (in Lithuania, the Netherlands and Poland) or the effects of ageing in the profession (Germany), and to adjust to the practices of western Europe (the Czech Republic and Lithuania).

While increasing demands were being placed on initial teacher education, special attention was also paid to in-service training. However, trends in the reform of initial teacher education were not always fully reflected in changes to in-service provision.

Thus while reforms during the reference period had a greater impact on the content of initial teacher education than on any other aspect, the content of **in-service training** was not altered to the same extent. This may be attributable to the fact that in-service training is generally less regulated and more decentralised than initial teacher education.

In-service training – just like initial teacher education – has demonstrated a tendency to decentralise responsibilities down to the level of education institutions. At the same time, the central authorities have often issued guidelines in order to safeguard compliance with minimum quality standards and improve consistency between initial teacher education and in-service training.

In **Greece**, a central institute was established in 2002 to plan, coordinate and ensure overall consistency among the different kinds of teacher education and agencies providing it.

In **Estonia** in 2000, the professional skills that prospective teachers had to have acquired to obtain their higher education qualification were specified in a regulatory framework. At the same time, in-service training was made compulsory and a component of school development strategy.

The same has applied to **Spain** since the 1980s, and particularly in the 1990s. The education authorities of the Autonomous Communities prepare training plans for institutions. For their part, institutions may organise their own seminars and working groups for the in-service training of their teachers.

In **Romania** in 2001, the ministry of education and research fixed general aims for initial teacher education and in-service teacher training, which will provide the basis for a reform.

The important measures adopted to make **in-service training compulsory** or a **precondition for promotion**, as well as those seeking to **fix the scale of its provision** should certainly be viewed in conjunction with the extension of the period of initial teacher education and the higher level of qualification required by new teachers. In eleven countries<sup>(6)</sup> in-service training was made compulsory or strongly advocated. These measures were introduced in the 1990s, which partly explains why the amount of in-service training was also fixed quite recently, from the second half of the 1990s.

The importance attached to in-service teacher training seems to indicate that the concepts of lifelong learning and continuing skills development are becoming increasingly common currency within the teaching profession.

### 3. REFORMS OF WORKING CONDITIONS

Among the reforms focused on working conditions, those concerned with **salaries** and **promotion** have been the main targets of legislation. The **working time, duties** and **professional codes of teachers**, as well as their **status** and **measures for their recruitment** and **retention within the profession**, have also been subject to amendment but to a lesser extent.

Finally, legislation has focused very recently on **teacher support measures** and the **evaluation** of teachers, where they exist.

#### 3.1. Salaries

The salaries of teachers in general lower secondary education were reformed mainly from 1985 onwards. The following three aspects in particular were changed: **new factors** were taken into account in the calculation of salaries, **salary scales** were revised and **basic salaries** were amended. Only three countries did nothing – other than indexing salaries in line with the cost of living – to alter the salary conditions of teachers between 1975 and 2002, namely Greece, Cyprus and Liechtenstein.

In **Sweden**, the decentralisation of school management in the 1980s and, more particularly, the decentralisation of responsibilities in 1991 had a major impact on teacher salaries. They were now negotiated between the employer and either the trade union to which teachers belonged or individual teachers themselves, with certain limits linked to the minimum scale.

The general trend was a rise in salaries except in the Netherlands, in which steps were taken to reduce salaries between 1979 and 1985 in order to reduce public expenditure. A similar policy was implemented in Spain, in which the salaries of public service staff (including teachers) were not indexed-linked to cost of living increases in 1994 and in 1997, so that in effect real salaries fell.

Reforms of salary conditions were mainly the outcome of three often interrelated factors as follows:

- **Salary norms were adjusted in accordance with political changes.** This occurred in Germany in 1993 in order to improve the salaries of teachers in the eastern *Länder*, following reunification of the country. A similar situation also arose in a few new Member States (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia) at the beginning of the 1990s, as a

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<sup>(6)</sup> In Belgium (the German-speaking Community), Germany, Estonia, Greece (solely for new entrants to the profession), Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Finland and Romania. Furthermore, in Germany (where in-service training was already compulsory) and in the Netherlands, in-service training has been considered an official obligation of teachers. In the French Community of Belgium, six half-days of training became mandatory in 2002.

result of changes in their political regime and adjustment of their education systems to practice in western Europe.

- **Changes were introduced to meet new demands required of teachers.** Several factors such as merit, performance, further qualifications and in-service training, and/or additional responsibilities were now taken into account when salaries were fixed. This occurred in many countries, including Denmark, Germany, Italy (in the case of teachers working with immigrant pupils), Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, the United Kingdom (Scotland), Iceland and Romania.
- **The need to make the profession more attractive,** thereby responding to problems of teacher shortage as in Latvia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). Improving the promotion prospects of teachers was also one of the aims of the *Protocole Durafour* (Durafour Agreement) in France (1990).

Merit or the quality of teaching were among the new criteria for calculating salaries in a substantial number of EU-15 and pre-accession countries (including those that were to become EU Member States on 1 May 2004). First apparent at the end of the 1980s, this trend became increasingly marked from the mid-1990s onwards<sup>(7)</sup>. The logic underlying it was that staff in the public sector – in this case teachers – should be provided with incentives to boost efficiency to a level approaching that of the private sector. In practice, this has resulted in a substantial effort to make teaching more flexible and enhance its quality by attaching greater importance to individual merit or performance. More personalised salary policies have developed as a result.

The reforms that have been introduced in **Poland** since 2000 constitute a good example of the trend towards basing salaries on individual considerations. The aim of such reforms is indeed to create differences in the salaries of teachers so that they will be encouraged to undertake training and improve the quality of their activity. Formerly, the careers of Polish teachers could be regarded as predictably uniform with no promotion prospects. These reforms are thus introducing a competitive element among teachers, the ultimate purpose of which is to boost the effectiveness and quality of their work.

### 3.2. Working time, duties and professional codes

Teaching time (referring to the time that teachers spend with their pupils, generally in the classroom) and the concept of working time have been the focus of the main reforms. By contrast, legislation has not often been concerned with subjects such as centralising or decentralising the definition of tasks, with increasing or decreasing them, or with professional codes, the definition of responsibilities, or pupil/teacher ratios.

**Teaching time** was reformed in 15 countries mainly with effect from the 1990s.

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(7) Countries in which this kind of increase is not provided for are Belgium, the Czech Republic, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland, the United Kingdom (Scotland), Iceland and Liechtenstein. See *The Teaching Profession in Europe: profile, trends and concerns. Key Topics in Education in Europe*, Volume 3. Report III: Working conditions and pay, Chapter 3 (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/fr/FrameSet3.htm>), and Report IV: Keeping teaching attractive for the 21st century, Chapter 4 (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/fr/FrameSet4.htm>). Brussels: Eurydice, 2003 and 2004.

**FIGURE 1: REFORMS TO REDUCE OR INCREASE INDIVIDUAL TEACHING TIME  
IN GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION (ISCED 2A), 1975-2002**

	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02
BE fr	●																		
BE de	●																		
BE nl	(:)																		
CZ									●					●		○			
DK	■																		
DE																			●
EE								●											
EL	■																		
ES				○							●	○							
FR	■																		
IE	(:)																		
IT	■																		
CY	■																		
LV	■																		
LT	■																		
LU														●					
HU									○				●					●	○
MT	■																		
NL											○				○				
AT	■																		
PL	■																		
PT								○											
SI								●						○					
SK																		●	
FI	■																		
SE	■																		
UK- ENG/WLS/NIR	■																		
UK-SCT																		○	
IS												●						●	
LI						○													
NO																		●	
BG	(:)																		
RO	■																		

- Increase in the amount of teaching time
- Reduction in the amount of teaching time
- No reforms on teaching time

Source: Eurydice.

Additional notes

**Germany:** Increases in teaching time were again introduced in some *Länder* after 2000.

**Slovenia:** The 1997 reduction in teaching time related solely to teachers who taught the language of instruction.

**United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR):** There has never been a statutory definition of teaching time. The legislation refers solely to *directed time*.

Several groups of countries stand out in Figure 1 as follows:

- Countries in which teaching time remained unchanged and was never reformed by the central authorities during the period under consideration. The countries concerned (shown in grey in the Figure) are Denmark, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Austria, Poland, Finland, Sweden and Romania.

However, it should be pointed out that the workload of teachers may also increase even where no clear-cut reform specifically sanctions this.

Thus, in the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, the work that teachers have to carry out has increased over time, with the adoption of new teaching methods, increased teacher responsibility for assessment and the implementation of new curricula, etc. This increased workload went unrecognised in legislation until the 2001 agreement to increase salaries. Similar situations have arisen in other countries.

- Countries in which teaching time was increased. The relevant measures were introduced in the 1980s in Belgium, and more recently (between 1991 and 2001) in Germany, Estonia, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Iceland and Norway.
- Countries in which teaching time was reduced. A measure to this effect was introduced twice in the Netherlands. Two similar measures date from the end of the 1980s and 1990 in Liechtenstein and Portugal, respectively, while a third came into force very recently in the United Kingdom (Scotland).
- Countries in which teaching time was increased and then reduced or vice versa. This occurred in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia (solely for teachers of the language of instruction).

In **Hungary**, teaching time was amended on four occasions. In 1992, it was reduced from 20 to 18 hours a week, and then fixed at 20 hours once more in 1996. In 2001 a new reform raised it to 22 hours a week until, in 2002, it was reduced yet again to 20 hours a week.

Reforms seeking either to increase or reduce teaching time have reflected the underlying tension between the desire to reduce expenditure and the need to make the profession more attractive.

Two examples of this come from Belgium and the Netherlands.

In **Belgium**, teaching time was increased in 1984 as a way of reducing the cost of education that would not affect teacher salaries. An increase in teaching time does indeed have positive outcomes in budgetary terms, as fewer teachers are required to complete the same overall amount of teaching time.

In the **Netherlands**, teacher salaries were decreased between 1979 and 1985, in order to reduce costs and because teacher supply outstripped demand. Later, the profession was considered so unattractive that there was a shortage of teachers, so salaries were increased. Teaching time was also reduced for the same reason in 1994 and 1998.

It should be emphasised that teaching time does not correspond to all working time covered by the contract of employment <sup>(8)</sup>. Thus the **workload** of teachers was redefined on several occasions in 11 countries, particularly after 1990. In countries in which this occurred, the main aim was to specify clearly in the contract the different activities that teachers had to perform, without necessarily identifying how much time had to be devoted to each. In some countries, such as Denmark, Spain, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), these activities were contractually defined in detail. In others, the description was far less detailed, or even limited to indicating a fixed number of hours earmarked for 'other activities'. In all cases, the workload as defined sent a clear message to society at large that the duties of teachers were not limited to the time in which they actually taught. However, redefining the workload sometimes involved increasing the amount of time teachers were required to work.

Contrary to this trend, reforms have been implemented in the **United Kingdom (England and Wales)** since August 2003, for the purpose of reducing working time and increasing the job satisfaction of teachers.

In seven countries (Denmark, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland and Liechtenstein), new tasks were officially added to the regular work of teachers in general secondary education. These reforms were implemented for the most part in the second half of the 1990s. The new obligations confronting teachers as a result vary widely. Teamwork (as in Denmark, Poland and Liechtenstein), in-service training (Malta, the Netherlands and Austria) and the continuous assessment of pupils (Denmark) are just three examples.

In **Finland**, the workload of teachers has gradually increased since the 1970s, but as a result of other reforms. Thus the development of the single structure education system has implied that teachers have to work with more mixed groups of pupils. Furthermore, since the 1990s, teachers have had to evaluate their own classroom practice and contribute to external evaluation. Finally, curriculum development has been radically decentralised and is now even partly determined by the teachers of each subject. The effect of all these measures has been to increase their workload and put greater pressure on them.

In a limited number of countries, salary increases occurred in roughly the same period as legislation or contracts to change the workload, in terms of either the amount of teaching time or the number of tasks involved. This applied to the Czech Republic in 1992, Estonia in 2001, Italy in 1997 (though to a limited extent), Malta in 2001, Poland in 2000, the United Kingdom (Scotland) in 2001, and Iceland and Norway, also both in 2001. In all cases, reforms affecting the workload of teachers occurred before those that increased salaries (which does not necessarily point to any link between the two). Occasionally, a considerable period of time elapsed between the workload reform and the salary increase. In Estonia, the first occurred in 1990 and the second in 1993, while the corresponding dates for the Netherlands (in which only a few teachers had their workload increased) and Slovenia were 1998 and 2001, and 1991 and 1993, respectively.

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(8) See *The Teaching Profession in Europe: profile, trends and concerns. Report III: Working conditions and pay, Chapter 2. Key Topics in Education in Europe*, Volume 3. Brussels: Eurydice, 2003 (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/fr/FrameSet3.htm>),.

### 3.3. Employment status and job security

The main reforms concerned with employment status and job security have affected the scope for teachers to transfer from one post to another – in general with a view to facilitating transfer – and the titles or categories of teachers.

Reforms concerned with employment status have occurred in a majority of countries. The only exceptions have been the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Cyprus, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Finland and Romania.

A change in status from that of a conventional employee to a public servant or vice versa is normally a major event in the professional life of a teacher. A change of this kind has occurred in law in only seven countries.

Teachers in **Denmark, Italy** and **Latvia** became employees subject to general employment legislation (in 1993 in Denmark and Italy, and 1994 in Latvia), whereas teachers in **Hungary, Slovenia** and **Slovakia** secured the status of public servants (in 1992, 1994 and 2002, respectively). In **Lithuania**, teachers became public servants in 1998, a status which was surrendered in 2002.

In **Denmark**, the change in the status of teachers was a consequence of the reform of the *Folkeskole* in 1990, which transferred responsibility for schools from the central authorities to the local authorities or schools themselves. In **Italy**, the corresponding change in status was a direct outcome of the decrease in importance of the public service, which also led to a slight decentralisation of responsibility for recruitment to school level, with school heads able to sign the employment contracts of teachers on the basis of delegated authority. However, teachers with permanent tenure remain employed by the CSA (*Centri Servizi Amministrativi*).

In the new EU member countries, the political changes that occurred often gave rise to reforms of the public service, bringing their legislation into line with EU practice. This sometimes resulted in changes in the status of teachers. On occasions, the need to make the teaching profession more attractive was also a contributory factor, as in **Slovakia** and **Lithuania** (in 1998). In **Latvia**, one of the main demands of teachers up to 1994 was that they should be guaranteed the status of public servants. The reform of their status implemented that year did not comply with their wishes in this respect.

For career civil servants<sup>(9)</sup>, appointment is still more significant and employment is only terminated under very exceptional circumstances. The acquisition or loss of this status is thus a major event in terms of job security. A change of this nature has occurred only in Italy, in which teachers lost the status of career civil servants in 1993 and became conventional employees. However, in actual practice the permanent nature of their contracts has remain untouched.

Finally, in Belgium (the French and German-speaking Communities), a few reforms have established the rights, obligations and general terms of employment of teachers in the public and grant-aided private sectors. In the German-speaking Community of Belgium and in Italy, measures have been introduced to improve the job security of teachers on insecure employment contracts.

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(9) Teachers have this status in systems in which they are recruited and employed by the top-level (central or regional) authorities for education and appointed for life as in Belgium, in schools administered by the Communities (although the status of teachers in the grant-aided sectors is officially regarded as equivalent), Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Austria (*Hauptschule* teachers), Malta and Portugal.

### 3.4. Measures concerned with selection, recruitment and retirement

The selection, recruitment or retirement of teachers have not been the subject of major reforms but a few changes are worthy of note.

The need to make the profession more attractive, which is often associated with the problem of teacher shortage, also underlies certain changes in the criteria for selecting and recruiting teachers. This was the case from 1993 onwards in France, in which special competitive examinations were organised so that teachers without secure jobs could be granted full tenure; or in the Netherlands in 2000 when it was made much easier for those with professional experience in other sectors to become teachers. In Hungary and Portugal, conditions of recruitment were established or redefined by more general framework regulations, respectively the *Közoktatási Törvény* (1993) with its amendments, and the *Estatuto da Carreira Docente* (1990).

The age of retirement has been changed in Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Finland, as well as in most countries of central and eastern Europe. The main aim of this kind of reform has been either to compensate for a shortage of teachers by encouraging those in service to continue their careers, particularly in the Netherlands, or to absorb an oversupply of teachers or budgetary resources by providing for easier early retirement, as in Austria. In the new Member States and candidate countries, the age of retirement has been put gradually further back to bring it more into line with the situation in the EU-15 before 1 May 2004 <sup>(10)</sup>. In the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), measures were introduced in 1997 to reduce the number of teachers taking early retirement and thus overcome a teacher shortage.

On occasions, reforms have affected the entire public sector, as in Spain and Finland. Reforms on the age of retirement are recent measures dating from the second half of the 1990s, except in Spain in which the first retirement age reforms occurred in the 1980s, and Portugal in which the retirement age was fixed by the 1990 *Estatuto da Carreira Docente*.

In **Spain**, the age at which teachers retire has been changed several times since the 1980s, whether in measures affecting the whole public sector, or just education. From 1990 onwards, teachers who had worked for 30 years, could retire at 60 and receive the full pension. Teachers aged 60 with 15 years of service could opt for early retirement on a lower pension. Since 1996, teachers may ask the administrative authorities for permission to continue their career until the age of 70.

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<sup>(10)</sup> See The Teaching Profession in Europe: profile, trends and concerns. *Key Topics on Education in Europe, Volume 3. Report IV: Keeping teaching attractive for the 21st century*, Chapter 4 (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/fr/FrameSet4.htm>), Brussels: Eurydice, 2004, pp. 53-54.

In conclusion, national education policies in the last 25 years have attached special importance to **teacher education**. Extensive policy reforms in this area throughout the 1990s sought to offer teachers enhanced quality education so that they would acquire the skills needed to carry out their activities. It is expected that newly trained teachers will reap the benefits of these changes, although it may be premature to gauge their precise impact on the quality of school education.

In comparison, the **working conditions** of teachers in general lower secondary education have not been reformed to the same extent. Yet it should be emphasised that, even in the absence of explicit reforms, teachers have experienced many changes in the practical nature of their profession. Their work has become more difficult and complex, and greater expectations have increasingly been placed on them. Young people will not be attracted into the profession simply through improved teacher education.

Policy-makers appear to have understood this and are attempting to cope with the situation. It would appear that, in recent years, a greater number of reforms have sought to clarify the job content of teachers and improve their working conditions. Fresh debate is being generated on all aspects of their profession – a sign perhaps that it is no longer undervalued and that the scale of the enterprise confronting teachers is far more widely acknowledged.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### I. EURYDICE NETWORK

#### A. EURYDICE EUROPEAN UNIT

Avenue Louise 240  
B-1050 Brussels  
(<http://www.eurydice.org>)

##### **Managing Editor and co-author**

Arlette Delhaxhe

##### **Authors of the comparative analysis**

Jesús Alquézar Sabadie, Misia Coghlan,  
Bernadette Forsthuber,  
María Luisa García Mínguez,

##### **Production coordinator**

Gisèle De Lel

##### **Secretarial support**

Helga Stammherr

##### **Web pages**

Brigitte Gendebien

## B. NATIONAL UNITS OF EURYDICE

### **BÄLGARIJA**

Eurydice Unit  
Equivalence and Information Centre  
International Relations Department  
Ministry of Education and Science  
2A, Knjaz Dondukov Bld  
1000 Sofia

### **BELGIQUE / BELGIË**

Unité francophone d'Eurydice  
Ministère de la Communauté française  
Direction des Relations internationales  
Boulevard Leopold II, 44 – Bureau 6A/002  
1080 Bruxelles

Vlaamse Eurydice-Eenheid  
Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap  
Departement Onderwijs  
Afdeling Beleidscoördinatie  
Hendrik Consciencegebouw 5 C 11  
Koning Albert II – laan 15  
1210 Brussel

Agentur Eurydice  
Agentur für Europäische Bildungsprogramme  
Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen  
Gemeinschaft  
Gospertstraße 1  
4700 Eupen

### **ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA**

Eurydice Unit  
Institute for Information on Education  
Senovážné nám. 26  
P.O. Box č.1  
110 06 Praha 06

### **DANMARK**

Eurydice's Informationskontor i Danmark  
CIRIUS  
Fiolstræde 44  
1171 København K

### **DEUTSCHLAND**

Eurydice  
EU-Bureau of the Federal Ministry of Education  
and Research  
Königswinterer Strasse 522-524  
53227 Bonn

Eurydice-Informationsstelle der Länder im  
Sekretariat der Kultusministerkonferenz  
Lennéstrasse 6  
53113 Bonn

### **EESTI**

Eurydice Unit  
Estonian Ministry of Education and Research  
Tallinn Office  
11 Tõnismägi St.  
15192 Tallinn

### **ELLÁDA**

Eurydice Unit  
Ministry of National Education and  
Religious Affairs  
Direction CEE / Section C  
Mitropoleos 15  
10185 Athens

### **ESPAÑA**

Unidad de Eurydice  
CIDE – Centro de Investigación y  
Documentación Educativa (MECD)  
c/General Oraá 55  
28006 Madrid

### **FRANCE**

Unité d'Eurydice  
Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de  
l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche  
Direction de l'évaluation et de la prospective  
61-65, rue Dutot  
75732 Paris Cedex 15

### **IRELAND**

Eurydice Unit  
Department of Education and Science  
International Section  
Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1

### **ÍSLAND**

Eurydice Unit  
Ministry of Education, Science and Culture  
Division of Evaluation and Supervision  
Sölvholsgata 4  
150 Reykjavík

### **ITALIA**

Unità di Eurydice  
Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della  
Ricerca – c/o INDIRE  
Via Buonarroti 10  
50122 Firenze

### **KYPROS**

Eurydice Unit  
Ministry of Education and Culture  
Kimonos and Thoukydidou  
1434 Nicosia

### **LATVIJA**

Eurydice Unit  
Socrates National Agency – Academic  
Programmes Agency  
Blaumaņa iela 28  
1011 Riga

### **LIECHTENSTEIN**

Eurydice-Informationsstelle  
Schulamt  
Austrasse 79  
9490 Vaduz

### **LIETUVA**

Eurydice Unit  
Ministry of Education and Science  
A. Volano 2/7  
2691 Vilnius

### **LUXEMBOURG**

Unité d'Eurydice  
Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la  
Formation professionnelle (MENFP)  
29, rue Aldringen  
2926 Luxembourg

### **MAGYARORSZÁG**

Eurydice Unit  
Ministry of Education  
Szalay u. 10-14  
1055 Budapest

### **MALTA**

Education Officer (Statistics)  
Eurydice Unit  
Department of Planning and Development  
Education Division  
Floriana CMR 02

### **NEDERLAND**

Eurydice Eenheid Nederland  
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en  
Wetenschap  
Directie Internationaal Beleid  
IPC 2300 / Kamer 10.086  
Postbus 16375  
2500 BJ Den Haag

### **NORGE**

Eurydice Unit  
Ministry of Education and Research  
Department for Policy Analysis and  
International Affairs  
Akersgaten 44  
0032 Oslo

### **ÖSTERREICH**

Eurydice-Informationsstelle  
Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft  
und Kultur – Abt. I/6b  
Minoritenplatz 5  
1014 Wien

## Reforms of the teaching profession in Europe: a historical survey (1975-2002)

### **POLSKA**

Eurydice Unit  
Foundation for the Development of the  
Education System  
Socrates Agency  
Mokotowska 43  
00-551 Warsaw

### **PORTUGAL**

Unidade de Eurydice  
Ministério da Educação  
Gabinete de Informação e Avaliação do  
Sistema Educativo (GIASE)  
Av. 24 de Julho 134  
1399-029 Lisboa

### **ROMÂNIA**

Eurydice Unit  
Socrates National Agency  
1 Schitu Magureanu – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
70626 Bucharest

### **SLOVENIJA**

Eurydice Unit  
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport  
Office for Development of Education (ODE)  
Kotnikova 38  
1000 Ljubljana

### **SLOVENSKÁ REPUBLIKA**

Eurydice Unit  
Slovak Academic Association for International  
Cooperation  
Socrates National Agency  
Staré grunty 52  
842 44 Bratislava

### **SUOMI / FINLAND**

Eurydice Finland  
National Board of Education  
Hakaniemenkatu 2  
00530 Helsinki

### **SVERIGE**

Eurydice Unit  
Ministry of Education, Research and Culture  
Drottninggatan 16  
10333 Stockholm

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

Eurydice Unit for England, Wales and Northern  
Ireland  
National Foundation for Educational Research  
(NFER)  
The Mere, Upton Park  
Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ

Eurydice Unit, Scotland  
The Scottish Executive Education Department  
(SEED)  
International Relations Unit  
Area 1-B South / Mailpoint 25  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

## II. NATIONAL EXPERTS

(designated by the Socrates Committee)

**Authors of the national contributions  
(clarifying historical and contextual aspects)  
(which were used for the study)**

### **BELGIQUE / BELGIË**

**Jacqueline Beckers / Marie-Catherine Voos**

Université de Liège  
Faculté de Psychologie et des Sciences de  
l'Éducation  
Boulevard du Rectorat 5 – Bât. B32  
4000 Liège

**Leonhard Schiffers**

Klosterstrasse 31  
4780 St. Vith

### **ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA**

**Jiří Kotásek**

Ústav výzkumu a rozvoje školství UK  
Myslíkova 7  
110 00 Praha

**Jiří Valenta**

Českomoravský odborový svaz pracovníků  
školství (Czech and Moravian Trade Union  
of Workers in Education)  
nám W. Churchilla  
113 59 Praha 3

### **DANMARK**

**Finn Held**

Aprilvej 24  
2730 Herlev

### **DEUTSCHLAND**

**Eberhard Jeuthe**

Leiershohlstrasse 29  
65760 Eschborn

### **EESTI**

**Terje Ots / Kai Völli**

Department of Education Policy  
Ministry of Education  
Munga 18  
50088 Tartu

### **ELLÁDA**

**Christos Doukas**

General Secretary of Adult Education  
L. Acharnon 417  
11143 Athens

### **ESPAÑA**

**José M. Esteve**

Catedrático de Teoría de la Educación  
Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación  
Universidad de Málaga  
29071 Málaga

### **FRANCE**

**Jean-Claude Eicher / Thierry Chevaillier**

IREDU-CNRS  
Université de Bourgogne  
Avenue Alain Savary 9  
B.P. 47870  
21078 Dijon Cedex

### **ÍSLAND**

**Thorey Gudmundsdottir**

Assistant professor at Iceland University of  
Education  
Klyfjasel 22  
109 Reykjavik

### **KYPROS**

**Christos Theofilides**

Director of the Committee of Educational  
Service  
Michalaki Karaoli Str.  
P.O. Box 1408  
Nicosia

### **LATVIJA**

**Tatjana Koke**

Director  
Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology  
University of Latvia  
Kronvalda bulv. 4  
1010 Riga

### **LIECHTENSTEIN**

**Reinhard Walser**

Pedagogue  
Hinterdorf 5  
9492 Eschen

### **LIETUVA**

**Ricardas Totoraitis**

Senior official for initial and in-service training  
Ministry of Education and Science  
2001 Vilnius

### **LUXEMBOURG**

**Jimmy Bedin**

Route de Longwy 335  
1941 Luxembourg

### **MALTA**

**Suzanne Gatt**

Dept. of Primary Education  
Faculty of Education  
University of Malta  
Msida MSD 06

### **NEDERLAND**

**Hans Vossensteyn**

Center for Higher Education Policy Studies –  
CHEPS  
Universiteit Twente  
P.O. Box 217  
7500 AE Enschede

### **NORGE**

**Asulv Froysnes**

Oslo College  
Wergelandsveien 27  
0167 Oslo

**Trygve Bergem**

University of Bergen  
Post Box 7800  
5020 Bergen

### **ÖSTERREICH**

**Michael Schratz / Paul Resinger**

Institut für Lehrer/innenbildung und  
Schulforschung  
Universität Innsbruck  
Christoph-Probst-Platz, Innrain 52  
6020 Innsbruck

### **POLSKA**

**Hanna Komorowska-Janowska**

Warsaw University  
Institute of English  
Teacher Training College of English  
Wawozowa 25/43  
02-796 Warszawa

### **PORTUGAL**

**António Teodoro**

R. Luis Queiroz, 26 F-9° Esq.  
2800 Almada

### **ROMÂNIA**

**Serban Iosifescu**

Institut des Sciences de l'Éducation  
Rue Stirbei Voda, No. 37  
70626 Bucarest

### **SLOVENIJA**

**Alenka Tastanoska**

Counsellor of the Government  
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport  
Zupanciceva 6  
1000 Ljubljana

**Tatjana Plevnik**

Counsellor of the Government  
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport  
Trubarjeva 5  
1000 Ljubljana

### **SLOVENSKÁ REPUBLIKA**

**Daniela Drobna**

Advisor for higher education and lifelong  
learning  
Rectorate of Comenius University  
Safarikovo nám. 6  
818 06 Bratislava

**SUOMI / FINLAND**

**Olli Luukkainen**  
Suomen kuntaliitto  
PO Box 200  
00101 Helsinki

**SVERIGE**

**Bengt Börjeson**  
Sågargatan 4  
116 36 Stockholm

**UNITED KINGDOM / Scotland**

**John Mitchell**  
141 Vancouver Drive  
Westwood, East Kilbride  
Glasgow G75 8NL

