ETUCE Policy Paper

‘Teacher Education in Europe’

CEDEFOP “Teachers and Trainers” conference
Thessaloniki, 23 February 2009
‘Teacher education is the bedrock of the education system’

‘A high quality teacher education is essential for:

- the quality of education at all levels
- the attractiveness, the high status, good working conditions and decent salaries for the teaching profession itself

OECD: « ‘Teacher quality is the single most important factor influencing pupils’ performance »»
Initial teacher education

- Initial teacher education at Master’s level
  - In-depth qualifications in all relevant subjects, including in pedagogical practice
  - Be research based, have high academic standards and at the same time be rooted in the everyday reality of schools
  - Include a significant research component in the final phase of initial teacher education – foster reflective practitioners
  - Give teachers the competence to exert a high degree of professional autonomy
Initial....2

- Have the right combination between theory and pedagogical practice, and the right combination between teaching practice as a subject at the teacher education institution and teaching practice arranged as separate periods in schools.

- Encourage teachers’ mobility between different levels of the education sector, provided that adequate re-qualification is acquired.
Teacher educators

- Teacher Educators – more attention should be paid to their role and profile:
  - Recruitment and retention: demographical trends show many will retire
  - Qualifications: Master’s degree or a Doctoral degree, and should possess practical experience of classroom teaching
  - Working conditions: teacher/student ratio; local, national and European networks; mobility opportunities
  - Opportunities for professional development: both time and financing
Attractiveness

- Recruitment and Retention of teachers:
  - A need to attract 1 million teachers in the next 10 years
  - Problems of attraction (59% said yes, 43 said no (AT, CY, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LI, LV, PL, PT).

- Reasons for problems of attracting candidates: low salaries, low status, bad reputation, bad publicity (PISA), limited career possibilities, poor working conditions, unemployment within certain subjects (ETUCE survey 2006)
Raising teachers status

- Raising the status of teachers by:
  - Strengthening/preserving the teachers’ professional autonomy
  - Increasing the confidence in the teaching profession
  - Securing that the authorities responsible for education have the necessary competences
  - Diffusing the positive stories about the teaching profession
  - Ensuring proper working conditions and high salary standards for teachers
Continuous Professional Development

- Quality CPD should be an integral part of professional life, not a ‘bolt-on extra’.
- Sufficient time should be provided to teachers to have guaranteed professional development.
- Each part must recognise their responsibility: teachers must recognise the importance of acquiring new knowledge; authorities/employers must ensure that CPD is an entitlement for teachers;
- CPD is to be covered financially by the employers; no financial costs must fall on individual teachers as a result of a need to undertake CPD.
- The experience and knowledge gained through CPD should be officially acknowledged and given appropriate credit, according to content and level.
However...

....improving access to and funding of CPD must not be done at the expense of lowering the quality and funding of initial teacher education.
ETUCE policy paper

Induction fase
Mentors
ECE
VET
Special needs teachers
Council of Education Ministers’ Conclusions:

The Ministers agree to promote that teachers during initial teacher education should acquire a range of competences, namely to:

- teach transversal competences; create a safe and attractive school environment;
- teach effectively in heterogeneous classes of pupils from diverse social and cultural backgrounds and with a wide range of abilities and needs;
- work in close collaboration with colleagues, parents and the wider community;
- develop new knowledge and be innovative through engagement in reflective practice and research;
- become autonomous learners in their own career-long professional development.