

The Bologna process and teacher education structures in Europe: Creating a European Teacher Education Area

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European Network on Teacher Education Policies

ENTEPE exists to promote cooperation among European Union Member States regarding their role in initial, in-service and further teacher education policies, in order to contribute to:

- Raising teacher education quality so as, in turn, to raise the quality of education and training in the European Union in a way which responds to the challenges of lifelong learning in a knowledge-based society.
- Developing a European dimension of education in teacher education programmes.
- Improving the public image of the teaching profession and mutual trust in the teaching qualifications awarded by Member-States.
- Promoting teacher mobility in the European Union.

To attain its goals, the Network develops opportunities to learn from other members on teacher education policies, by analysing and comparing policies and issues, as well as by sharing good practices through several kinds of activities. The Network uses an open frame of reference for informal exchange and shares knowledge on the basis of written and oral presentations related to specific challenges and issues on teacher education policies.

ENTEPE has already developed a profile of the European teacher¹, which outlines the professional characteristics of future teachers in Europe. In the past few years the Bologna Process has had a major impact on the reorganisation of higher education. It has also strongly affected many aspects of teacher education including structures, organisation and curricula. ENTEPE welcomes policy developments which facilitate the mobility of students, teachers and teacher educators, enhance the European dimension in teacher education and improve the quality of education.

ENTEPE members have collected information about recent reforms and changes in initial teacher education structures with a view to examining how these reforms address and relate to the objectives of the Bologna process, namely:

- to adopt a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
- to adopt a system of essentially two cycles
- to establish a system of credits (ECTS)

The information collected (see appendix) suggests that reforms in the organisation and structure of initial teacher education have been implemented in most countries, after the adoption of the Bologna Declaration in 1999. The visibility, readability and comparability of teacher education structures and respective qualifications remain problematic, however.

The information collected can be summarised as follows.

¹ ENTEPE, Michael Schratz, “What is a European Teacher?” available at <http://entep.bildung.hessen.de/ETFfinalJune2005.pdf>

Pre-primary school teacher education

- Over half of countries introduced reforms in initial pre-primary teacher education after the initiation of the Bologna process (1999).
- In most cases those reforms were, in some way, connected to the national implementation of the Bologna process.
- In over two thirds of the countries a degree at higher education level is required for pre-primary school teachers. Mostly this is a BA level degree. A few countries are introducing a Masters degree.
- In almost two thirds of countries there are no alternative pathways to pre-primary teacher status. In a few countries primary school teachers are also qualified for pre-primary school.
- About three quarters of countries apply the concurrent model, (generally combining educational sciences with teacher education). A few countries offer both concurrent and consecutive models or combine them in different ways.
- The duration of initial pre-primary teacher education varies across countries, ranging from 3 to 4 years of study.
- In just over half of countries, pre-primary school teachers are educated at universities. In all other cases there is great variety, ranging from upper secondary level to non-university higher education institutions.
- A few countries have implemented ECTS in pre-primary teacher education
- There is a clearly visible and longer-term trend for countries to move initial education for pre-primary school teachers into the university sector and to increase the number of years of study.
- There is also a, somewhat weaker, trend to introduce a Masters level degree as a requirement for qualification as pre-primary school teacher.

Primary school teacher education

- Almost all countries introduced reforms in initial primary teacher education after the initiation of the Bologna process (1999).
- In most cases those reforms were, in some way, connected to the national implementation of the Bologna process.
- In all countries a degree at higher education level is required for qualification as a primary school teacher. In most cases this is a BA level degree.
- In very few countries alternative pathways exist to qualification as primary school teacher, (and this is mainly for holders of higher education degrees, other than primary school teaching qualifications)
- Most countries apply the concurrent model, (generally combining educational sciences with teacher education). A few countries offer both concurrent and consecutive models or combine them in different ways.
- The duration of initial primary school teacher education varies across countries, ranging from 3 to 5 years.
- In over three quarters of countries, primary school teachers are educated only in universities. In a few countries primary school teachers are also educated in non-university higher education institutions.
- About half of countries have introduced ECTS in initial primary school teacher education

- There is a clearly visible and longer-term trend for countries to move initial education for primary school teachers into the university sector and to increase the number of years of study.
- There is also a trend, although somewhat weaker, to introduce a Masters level degree as a requirement for qualification as a primary school teacher.

Subject teacher education

- Most countries introduced reforms in the initial education of subject teachers after the initiation of the Bologna process (1999).
- Those reforms generally were, in some way, connected to the national implementation of the Bologna process.
- A higher education level degree is required to qualify as subject teacher and this is generally a BA level degree plus, in some cases, a teacher education qualification^[PSH2]. A few countries are introducing a Masters level degree.
- In most countries subject teachers are educated in universities. In a few countries this is also possible in other higher education institutions.
- Some countries are moving the initial education of subject teachers into universities and increasing the length of study.
- Alternative pathways to teacher qualification are rather rarely used for subject teacher education.
- Most countries apply consecutive models in initial subject teacher education. A few countries apply the concurrent model or both models if for ^[PSH3]different subjects.
- The duration of initial subject teacher education varies across countries, ranging from 4 to 6.5 years.
- Most countries have introduced ECTS in subject teacher education.
- There is a clear visible trend for countries to transfer subject teacher education into universities.
- There is also an emerging trend towards the introduction of a Masters level degree, as a second cycle in subject teacher education.

These reforms have contributed to the establishment of a “European Teacher Education Area” within the European Higher Education Area. The information collected by ENTEP highlights the diversity of initial teacher education structures and systems in Europe and the multiple routes to teacher status across countries.

ENTEP welcomes the reforms and looks for further progress in the following areas:

- improving the readability and comparability of teacher education structures ^[PSH4]in Europe
- strengthening the professionalization of the teaching profession in Europe;
- enhancing research-based teacher education;
- increasing flexibility in teacher education structures;
- further implementing ECTS in teacher education programmes;
- increasing competence orientation in initial teacher education
- facilitating mobility among students, teachers and teacher educators;

- further developing a professional continuum (lifelong learning) in teacher education²

ENTEP invites national and European level authorities under the Bologna process Follow-up Group to accord special attention to teacher education structures.

ENTEP appreciates that competent authorities, at national and European level, are constantly working to improve the exchange of information on current developments and trends in the field of teacher education in the Member States on the way to a European Teacher Education Area.

² ENTEP, Ursula Uzerli and Lucien Kerger The Continuous Professional Development of Teachers in EU Member States: New Policy Approaches, New Visions, available at http://entep.bildung.hessen.de/entep_vilnius_cpd_text.pdf