Teacher Policies in the NEPC region

A comparative study of teacher policies in 10 countries

MARIA GOLUBEVA

Network of Education Policy Centers

Published by:
Network of Education Policy Centers, 2014

For the Publisher:
Lana Jurko

Main Researcher:
Maria Golubeva

Country Researchers:
Azerbaijan: N. A. Mammadov, V. M. Huseynov
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ivona Čelebičić, Radmila Rangelov Jusović, Tom Heinen
Croatia: Iris Marušić
Estonia: Laura Kirss
Georgia: Giorgi Machabeli, Sophia Gorgodze
Kyrgyzstan: Aleksandr Ivanov, Tatiana Matokhina
Macedonia: Gorica Mickovska, Vera Kondik Mitkovska, Loreta Georgieva
Mongolia: Batjargal Batkhuyag
Serbia: Milica Grahovac, Jasminka Čekić Marković, Gordana Miljević
Slovakia: Michaela Farenzenová, Martina Kubánová

DPT&Print:
ITG digitalni i offset tisak

Partner organization(s):
Center for Innovations in Education, Azerbaijan
proMENTE social research, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Center for Educational Initiatives Step by Step, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Institute for Social Research - Centre for Educational Development, Croatia
Praxis Center for Policy Studies, Estonia
Institute for Education Policy, Planning and Management, Georgia
Foundation Education Initiatives Support, Kyrgyzstan
Macedonian Civic Education Center, Macedonia
Mongolian Education Alliance, Mongolia
Centre for Education Policy, Serbia
Slovak Governance Institute, Slovakia

We would like to thank all Ministry of Education representatives and representatives of teachers' organisations that accepted to participate in the research.

Contents

1 Introduction

This study has emerged as an initiative of the Network of Education Policy Centres addressing the lack of comprehensive comparative studies on teacher policies in the region where its members are active – the new Member States of the EU, Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership countries and Central Asia and Mongolia.

The study maps teacher policies in the diverse region represented by NEPC members. All data in this report is based on the situation in 2013 when the research was done. As a basis for this exercise, SABER-Teachers methodology of the World Bank was adapted.

As pointed out by the World Bank paper on teacher policies in the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) series, 'Recent studies have shown teacher effectiveness is a key predictor of student learning. A number of studies have found that teacher effectiveness is the most important school- based predictor of student learning and that several consecutive years of outstanding teaching can offset learning deficits of disadvantaged students (Hanushek & Rivkin 2010; Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien & Rivkin 2005; Rockoff 2004; Sanders & Rivers 1996).'[1]

1.1 The methodology

The methodology of this comparative study is based on the SABER-Teachers framework.

The analytical framework for the analysis of teacher policies used in this study has been developed by SABER -Teachers – a work programme within the Human Development Network's Education Sector of the World Bank. It consists of 7 policy goal areas, outlined in the table below. In each policy goal area, related policy levers (actions that governments can take to reach these goals) are indicated.

Table 1.1 SABER analytical framework

Section name	Policy levers covered
Setting expectations	Statutory duties of teachers, statutory regulation of teachers' working time
Recruitment and career advancement	Required levels of ITE for primary and secondary school teachers, regulations concerning teachers' salaries, teachers' career path regulations
Preparing teachers	Requirements for enrolment in teaching faculties, the average academic level of candidates enrolled in teaching faculties, quality of teacher education and the acquisition of practical teaching skills
Matching skills to needs	Policies regarding special incentives to attract teachers to teach in schools that are under performing, or serving disadvantaged populations, and/ or policies and incentives to address the shortages of teachers in certain subject areas.

1 World Bank (2013) What matters most for teacher policies: a framework paper. SABER Working Paper Series.

Section name	Policy levers covered
Leadership	Availability of specialised support for the CPD of school principals, rewards for performance, the role of principals in teaching guidance and teacher evaluation, support for teacher leadership.
Evaluation and monitoring	The role of teachers in the assessment of students' progress, availability of external assessments of students' performance and the use of students' assessments to inform teaching practice, evaluation of teachers and the role of local authorities and professional communities in teacher evaluation.
Supporting teachers	Policies regarding CPD

For each country, the researchers have conducted a study of secondary sources (policy documents and legal regulation of teachers' work) and in some cases interviews with the Ministry of Education representatives and with representatives of teachers' organisations. The results were analysed using a template based on the SABER framework. The national reports, offering a more contextual analysis of the national teacher policies, were used for background information to interpret the data about policy regulation.

Some questions from the SABER-Teachers framework were adapted to the practices and specific context of the region (without introducing major changes to the framework). In one case, the emphasis in questions on school leadership was shifted from the managerial model to a more participatory model of distributed leadership, reflecting the NEPC values and perspective on leadership.

It is important to keep in mind that the study is not a benchmarking exercise, comparing how advanced the teacher policies in specific countries are. Rather, the SABER framework provides a mapping tool outlining the areas in which there have to be policies and support – albeit not necessarily strictly of the kind suggested in some cases. For instance, incentives for school principals of best performing schools may be substituted by incentives for the whole school, including teachers (e.g. bonuses) and students - e.g. additional funding for school trips, or for innovative projects involving teachers, students and local community. However, a total absence of incentives for schools and teachers that perform well may present a problem.

2 Background: teacher policies in Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Central Asia

2.1 Teaching culture, teaching practice and teacher policies

Despite the diversity of the regions currently represented by NEPC members, there is a common heritage linking the education systems of the countries in this study – they were all at some point influenced, for an extensive period of time, by the Soviet and related Socialist models of public education, with its slant towards privileging theoretical approaches over pedagogy, the role of education in channelling state ideology, and a developed but inflexible system of teaching institutes and methodological units. This heritage has influenced the culture of teaching in the countries of East Central Europe, the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and has created certain habits and expectations, as well as teaching and learning practices, which still influence the understanding of what teachers' work should be about.

The old teaching culture in the region has been theoretical, teacher-centred and rather inflexible – and these features still persist in teaching practices throughout the region, often coexisting with more recent interactive and student-centred models of teaching. At practical level, the pace of change is slow. At the same time, many countries in the last two decades have lived through ambitious education reforms that have transformed the professional and academic requirements defining teachers' work, and have often left teachers with a sense of uncertainty about their status and their responsibilities, without necessarily changing their teaching habits.

The analysis of teacher policies below will outline the areas where rules of the game are currently unclear, or where the gap between higher policy levels and implementation, e.g. teaching practices, persists.

2.2 Teacher policies in the EU – a factor of influence

A large number of countries in this study seek to harmonize their education policies with those of the EU. This concerns Croatia, Estonia and Slovakia as EU members and the Western Balkan countries as countries with an EU integration agenda. Also, Eastern Partnership countries show certain interest in the developments of education in the EU.

Within EU cooperation in education and training, there is a growing emphasis on the quality of education and training systems. It has been increasingly recognised that the quality of teacher education and teacher policies is a crucial factor, as a necessary precondition for the quality of education provided to students. As a part of the thematic cooperation on school education, the European Commission made a series of proposals to improve the quality of teacher education in the EU Member States, focusing on the following priorities[2]:

2 http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc832_en.htm

- Ensuring that all teachers have the knowledge, attitudes and pedagogic skills that they require to be effective;
- Ensuring that teachers' education and professional development is coordinated, coherent, and adequately resourced;
- Promoting a culture of reflective practice and research among teachers;
- Promoting the status and recognition of the teaching profession; and
- Supporting the professionalization of teaching.

Other EU strategic documents also emphasise the need for the high quality of teaching across Europe's education systems. The Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020) states that 'there is a need to ensure high quality teaching, to provide adequate initial teacher education, continuous professional development for teachers and trainers, and to make teaching an attractive career-choice'.[3]

These goals set out at the EU level may have an influence on policies and strategies, or even legal regulations of the teachers' profession defined by national policy makers in some of the countries covered by the study. At practical level, however, some studies show that policy aspirations are not always matched by underpinning policy infrastructure, regulations, funding and support. The comparative analysis of country data below suggests that this is often the case in the countries included in this study.

3 Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:119:0002:01:EN:HTML

3 Setting clear expectations for teachers

The expectations set by statutory regulations and policy documents on teachers' professional duties and the amount of work and time that the teachers have to put into their work are discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Statutory duties of teachers

In most of the countries included in this study, national framework curriculum defines learning outcomes that are to be achieved by different levels of school education. However, in many cases, the outcomes-oriented learning approach does not go beyond the highest level of framework curriculum. In some cases (e.g. Kyrgyzstan), even subject standards are not tuned to the outcomes-based approach defined in the national framework curriculum, and instead, old standards describing academic knowledge required from students are used in most schools. In some countries, where national framework curriculum has not yet been adopted (e.g. Croatia), learning outcomes are nevertheless defined in other legal acts and official documents. In many cases, while the duty of the teachers to engage in professional development is stipulated in laws, there are no incentives offered to teachers engaging in professional development and no penalty attached to not engaging in it. E.g. in Georgia, according to the Law on General Education, "a teacher is responsible for his/her professional development", but a teacher's position is not dependent on the proof of having done so.

In some countries in this study, legislation goes as far as stipulating teaching practices. E.g., in Kyrgyzstan, the Law on the Status of Teachers defines the principles of teaching practices. Nevertheless, the fragmented implementation of the national framework curriculum hardly allows for the stipulated practices to be observed in all schools.

Teachers' duties and tasks are officially stipulated in laws and regulations in Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovakia.

Similarly, the obligation of teachers to engage in professional development is stipulated at statutory level in most countries included in this study, but more often than not, this requirement is general, without any underpinning policies defining the parameters of professional development or allocating government resources for this purpose. For example, in Bosnia, obligation of teachers to engage in professional development is stated without any precise description of teachers' responsibilities in this respect. Some cantons do not have bylaws connected to professional development and those that do, often only list the types of professional development, without defining its outcomes. In Croatia, the bylaws underpinning professional development requirements for teachers have not been adopted.

Bylaws defining the priorities of continuing professional education (CPD)

A system of requirements for teachers' professional development exists in Serbia, where the Rulebook on continuing professional development defines several horizontal priorities for teachers' professional development including communication skills & ICT technologies, cooperation with parents, students and students' parliaments, strengthening of employees' professional capacities in innovative methods of teaching and class management, learning to learn and developing motivation for learning.

3.2 Statutory regulation of teachers' working hours

Statutory regulation of teachers' working time differs significantly from country to country. As can be seen from the table 1.2 below, some countries have adapted the 35, 36 or 40 hours working week for teachers, putting a limit on the number of hours a teacher is expected to work. However, with the number of contact hours sometimes rising to 34 (Azerbaijan) or 31 (Kyrgyzstan) it is difficult to expect teachers to put much time into preparation, peer learning or research.

In some countries, like Estonia, the proportion of teaching and non-teaching hours is not regulated at all, whereas in the case of Georgia, the number of non-teaching hours allocated per week is equal to the number of teaching hours.

Table 3.1 Statutory regulation o*f teaching hours

Country	Maximum hours per working week	Number of contact hours in primary school	Number of contact hours in secondary school
Azerbaijan	No	19-21	29-34
Bosnia and Herzegovina	40	18-30	18-20
Croatia	40	20-22	20-22
Georgia	36	13	15-18
Estonia	35	Not regulated	Not regulated
Kyrgyzstan	No	31	31
Macedonia	40	20-23	20-23
Mongolia	40	19	19
Slovakia	40	23	22
Serbia	40	20-22	20-24

3.3 Analysis: reforms and uncertainty

As can be seen from the data above, in most cases statutory documents set expectations of what the outcomes of teachers' work should be, and how much work (in terms of time) teachers are expected to put into achieving these outcomes. However, underlying this seeming certainty in terms of expected inputs and expected results is the big uncertainty regarding the ways to reconcile the statutory requirements with the realities of teachers' work and life.

In Serbia, results of the recent study Teachers in Serbia: Attitudes towards the Profession and Reforms in Education[4], in which teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards education reforms in Serbia and their impact on teachers' work were analysed, showed that for many teachers, the meaning of some new legal obligations remains unclear, occasionally completely unknown.

4 N. Pantic and J. Cekic Markovic (eds.) (2012), Teachers in Serbia: Attitudes towards the Profession and Reforms in Education.

Lack of clear guidelines for teachers on how to implement new curriculum reforms and the frustration caused by changing and unclear expectations seem to be common for teachers in other Western Balkan countries as well.[5]

In Kyrgyzstan, the National Standard Framework (Curriculum) defines the learning outcomes, but the path to achieving those is still very unclear, with subject curricula only being tested in a limited number of schools. The bulk of schools are taught according to the old standards, which describe the academic knowledge the students are expected to have and not their skills and competences.

5 See A. Duda, M. Golubeva, T. Clifford –Amos (2013), Teacher Education and Training in the Western Balkans. ***European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc/teacher/report_en.pdf***

4 Recruitment and career advancement

This chapter looks in comparative perspective at required levels of ITE for primary and secondary school teachers, at regulations concerning teachers' salaries, and at policies defining teachers' career path and advancement.

4.1 Required levels of initial teacher education

Requirements for initial teacher education also differ quite significantly between countries included in this study. The table below demonstrates the variance of requirements regarding the number of study years and degree required for initial teacher education (ITE).

Country	Number of years and degree required for ITE, primary school	Number of years and degree required for ITE, secondary school
Azerbaijan	4, BA	4, BA
Bosnia and Herzegovina	BA	MA or BA + 5 years' experience
Croatia	5 years, MA	5 years, MA
Estonia	5 years, MA	5 years, MA
Georgia	4 years, BA	4-5 years, BA
Kyrgyzstan	BA	BA or MA
Macedonia	4 years, BA	4 years, BA
Mongolia	4 years, BA	4 years, BA
Serbia	MA, or BA + 4 years' experience	MA, or BA + 4 years' experience
Slovakia	5 years, MA	5 years, MA

While countries that are more closely influenced by the convergence of education policies on teacher qualifications in the EU, as a rule require master's level education from teachers, countries in the Eastern Partnership countries and Central Asia do not require this. Some countries in the Western Balkans are currently in the transition stage, allowing teachers to substitute years of professional experience for second-level tertiary education.

4.2 Teachers' salaries

The level of teacher's salaries is below the average national salary nationwide in Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Serbia. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and in Macedonia, teachers' salaries vary but are on the whole close to the national average. In Azerbaijan, Mongolia and Slovakia, teachers' salaries are above the national average.

On the whole, given that the level of teachers' education is as a rule above the national average, the situation with teachers' salaries in the region can be described as unsatisfactory. Aspects of this phenomenon are described in more detail in the next sub-section.

4.3 Incentives for teachers' performance

The question whether part of teachers' salary depends on teachers' performance (e.g. on participation in continuing professional development (CPD), or on mentoring other teachers), is one of the keys to understanding whether the policy of teachers' remuneration supports incentives as a way to improve performance.

Unfortunately, in most countries included in this study, that is not the case. In some countries, salary increase is connected to advancement to the next career stage (which can indeed depend on e.g. continuing professional development), bus as long as the teacher stays in the same position, the salary does not include incentives based on performance.

Countries of the former Soviet Union (Georgia, Kyrgyzstan) are experimenting with a salary based on 'coefficients' which include performance-related items. However, the efficiency of this system remains unclear (see the example with teachers' salaries in Georgia below):

A formula to calculate teachers' salaries

In Georgia, teachers' salaries are calculated according to a formula. The salary depends on a teacher's education (vocational, BA, MA, PHD or only high school graduate), number of years in service, full-time or part-time status. Certified teachers get bonuses of 75 GEL. Also, some teachers who have taken additional English and Computer exams get a salary of up to 1000 GEL (however these examinations are not effective now and the number of teachers who get 1000 GEL is only a couple of hundred).

In Mongolia, between 10 and 30% of teachers' salary depends on performance. However,the way the performance is defined is apparently very formal.

4.4 Career advancement stages for teachers

In all countries in this study except for Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan[6], there are several professional career levels for teachers, and career advancement is possible.

In the Western Balkan countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Macedonia there is a common system of three levels: teacher, teacher mentor and teacher advisor. In Serbia, the system is slightly more complex, with the levels of pedagogical advisor, independent pedagogical advisor, higher advisor or senior pedagogical advisor introduced in law.

Interestingly, however, the possibility of a career advancement does not seem to be a factor of major influence where the prestige of the teaching profession in Western Balkan countries is concerned:

6 In Kyrgyzstan, a teacher can become a head of methodological union according to the decision of the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science 19.05.2011 #5/1 "On the qualification requirements for the administration and social teachers of general education organizations of the Republic", however, there is no general legal and policy framework for teachers' career stages.

studies have shown a low prestige of teaching as a profession that influences the number of students applying for teacher education programmes.[7]

In Georgia, Teacher Professional Development Scheme is currently being developed, and career advancement stages linked to performance are not yet effective.

In Slovakia, a new Teachers Act from 2009 enacted four career stages and awarding of credits for participation in continuous education that can increase the salary by up to 12%. However, negative side-effects are race-to-the-bottom tendencies with teachers applying for the cheapest and easiest credit-earning courses, while the quality of courses and their impact on teaching in the classroom remain questionable.

7 N.Pantić, A. Closs, V. Ivošević (2011). Teachers for the Future: Teacher Development for Inclusive Education in the Western Balkans. ETF, p.61.

5 Preparing teachers

In this chapter, the requirements of teaching faculties regarding the initial academic level of students enrolling there, the average academic level of the candidates, the presence of induction or mentoring requirements for novice teachers, and the general quality of teacher education are discussed.

5.1 Enrolment requirements and average academic level of successful candidates

In most countries in the study, enrolment requirements in teaching faculties are based on the results of secondary education (either the results of centralised exams or secondary school grades). Testing of candidates by teaching faculties themselves still plays a role in some of the countries.

In Estonia, for subject teachers, a bachelor's degree in the field of specialisation is required as the qualification system is set up in a way where professional education in a particular field (Science, History, etc.) is supplemented by teacher education in this field.

In most countries in this study, statistics on the average academic level of students enrolling in teaching faculties is not available. Where there is available data, it suggests that their academic level is not high (e.g. in Georgia, according to the data from 2010, students enrolling in teacher preparation programmes had the lowest share of scholarships awarded to good students (6%) among all study fields (29% on average, 11% in agriculture and 55% in social sciences, business and law).[8]

In Mongolia, the average academic level of students enrolling in teaching faculties is also below national average.

Low popularity of teaching programmes

In Estonia, the popularity of teaching programmes among school graduates is relatively low. During the last enrolment period, the average national examination score among the successful candidates was 65.2 (on the scale of 100) referring to a rather average quality of enrolled students.

The level of competition in teaching programmes is considerably below that of programmes preparing for prestigious professions. During the last two years, the most popular teacher education programme at the University of Tartu has been the class teacher programme, which in 2011 had a competition of 6.3 persons per study place (3.2 in 2012). The programme of a class teacher in bilingual schools and hobby teacher had a competition of 2.7 and 2.4 candidates per place respectively in 2012. In other programmes, the competition varied between 1.1–1.7 suggesting that the programmes do not attract large numbers of potential candidates. For comparison, the most popular programmes like law or psychology had a competition of 23.5 and 17 per place respectively.

8 A. Ziderman, , N.Andguladze, (2010).

5.2 Quality of teacher education and the acquisition of practical teaching skills

Teacher education is one of the areas where changes are happening slowly, and much of the heritage of teacher-centred, theoretically slanted, inflexible teaching model of the twentieth century still lives on in the teaching faculties of the region.

Thus, the studies of teacher education in the Western Balkans in the last decade have shown that despite many reforms implemented in the education sector[9], the emphasis on theory in teacher education still predominates over practical learning of teaching competences, and the gap between theory and practice in teacher training still exists.[10] A relatively recent survey of teacher education in the region concluded that:

> 'Future teachers need help in developing practical skills, attitudes and values that underlie teaching profession. Moreover, they need more opportunities to try out and further develop their competence in practice, and they need to be pushed to reflect on relations between theories and practice.[11]

For many countries represented in this study, there are no up-to date comprehensive studies evaluating the quality of teacher education available.

Length of obligatory teaching practice for novice teachers also varies from country to country. According to Eurydice study (2013) Croatia and Slovakia have the lowest allocation of hours for in-school placement at faculties of education.

5.3 Induction and mentoring of novice teachers

Not all countries in this study have induction or mentoring programmes for novice teachers, and where those requirements exist, they are not necessarily supported by the actual policy and practice.

Thus, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, during the first year of teaching and before the licensing exam, novice teachers must have mentors who visit and observe their classes and whose classes the novice teachers have to observe. However, there are no clear requirements for mentors, or procedures for mentoring; therefore, the quality of induction varies from school to school.

The situation is different in Croatia, Estonia, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovakia, where articulated requirements for an induction period for novice teachers exist.

In Croatia, there is a mandatory one-year induction period for novice teachers who enter school. The programme of induction is approved by Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA). A mentor teacher is appointed in their school who is supposed to support them in their development.

In Estonia, on-the-job qualifying practice (kutseaasta) is aimed at enabling graduate teachers to apply their knowledge and skills acquired during teachers' training and to prepare for the teaching profession; another purpose of the on-the-job qualifying practice is giving feedback to educational institutions on their teachers' training curriculum and its efficiency.

In Serbia, induction is the process necessary for each novice school teacher to get the teaching license. License for teachers, educators and professionals in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools was

9 For a recent analysis of TE reforms, see especially N. Pantić (2012), Teacher Education Reforms between Higher Education and General Education Transformations in South-Eastern Europe: Reviewing the Evidence and Scoping the Issues, CEPS Journal, Vol. 2, n. 4, 2012, University of Ljubljana.

10 Ibid. See also Rajović, V., Radulović, L. (2007). Kako nastavnici opažaju svoje inicijalno obrazovanje: na koji način su sticali znanja i razvijali kompetencije. Nastava i vaspitanje, 4, 413–435; Zgaga, P. (Ed.). (2006). The Prospects of Teacher Education in South-east Europe. Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana.

11 Pantic (2008), 139.

introduced by the law in 2003, as a requirement for work in schools, but not for recruitment. License has replaced the exam that teachers took at the respective faculties after one year of school internship.

In Slovakia, the induction system is closer to the old model in socialist countries: the requirement for 'adaptive education' implies that a novice teacher undergoes additional training with an induction teacher, which lasts from three months to one year, and is completed with a final exam before a committee and teaching a demonstration lesson.

6 Matching skills to needs

Needs-based approach to teaching policies, offering incentives and support in order to provide extra teaching effort where it is most needed, is not part of the general approach to teacher policies in the region, and few countries show evidence that such approaches are being developed.

Special incentives to attract teachers to work in schools which are considered low performing or problematic (e.g. schools in poor areas, schools in distant rural districts and/ or schools where lower-performing students tend to be more than the average percentage of all students) exist only in Azerbaijan, Estonia and Georgia, and only in Estonia they seem to have a systematic and well-defined character:

Support for new teachers to move to less developed areas

In Estonia in 2008, a new teacher's start-up support scheme was launched that supports young teachers who have passed teachers' training and who take up employment outside 2 largest towns (Tallinn and Tartu). The support is financial, of which 50% is paid out at the beginning of employment and the rest within the three year employment period. In 2013, the support provided was EUR 12,782.00.

In a number of countries in the study, shortages of teachers in some subject areas (e.g. science, technology, and math) has been reported. However, only Estonia has an incentive in place to attract students to the areas where more need for teachers is perceived: the Ministry of Education and Research has established a scholarship for students in teacher training and since 2011, the priority in the scholarship distribution decisions was given to the applicants studying in the Sciences and Technology fields. Additionally, a new proposal on higher education scholarships has been given by the Ministry of Education and Research which aims to award scholarships to students in the study fields of ICT, Technology, Biology, Physics, Mathematics, Health and Agriculture.

In many cases, the shortage of teachers is not due to the lack of qualified candidates, but due to unattractive salaries in the sector, inducing graduates of teacher faculties to choose other career paths (e.g. ICT specialists, office workers with foreign language skills).

In some countries, no centralised statistics on teacher shortages is available.

7 Leadership

Availability of CPD trainings and resources specifically targeted at school leaders, support for the development of distributed leadership in schools and teacher leadership, as well as support for the school principals' meaningful engagement in the guidance and evaluation of teachers' work are all important pre-conditions for the successful functioning of schools as communities of teaching professionals. This chapter deals with key findings regarding the availability of such supports in the countries included in the study.

7.1 Support for CPD of school leaders

Not all countries included in the study have any systematic support available to school principals to develop their leadership and management competences. Thus, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Serbia, no special competence framework for school principals has been developed, and no set of CPD trainings is systematically available.

In the remaining countries, requirements of developing and proving certain competences for school principals have been adopted. They are fundamentally of two types: programmes for candidates or new principals, and programmes for acting principals.

Thus, in Macedonia, candidates for a school principal's position have to undergo a training programme of six modules, and to pass a final examination.

Similarly in Slovakia, candidates for school principals have to undergo a training focused mostly on acquiring information about legal and administrative aspects related to this position.

In Estonia, a competence framework for school leaders has been developed and CPD modules based on it are targeted at principals already serving in their positions. In Croatia, a future competence framework for principals is envisaged by the newly proposed Strategy of education, science and technology but it is not yet a requirement. There are compulsory elements of school principals' training prescribed by law.

Competence frameworks and CPD for school principals

In Croatia, the Act on Primary and Secondary Education (2008) stipulates compulsory elements of training programmes for school principals. These elements include:

- clearly outlined objectives and competences,
- training methods and methods of evaluation and certification.

This framework is expected to provide a basis for the design and provision of outcome-based training for school principals. The programme currently includes 10 training modules in strategic management and leadership skills, human resources management, organizational diagnostics, financial management and quality improvement. From 2010 on, this program is offered to all school principals who are serving their first mandate. However, there is no mandatory training for newly appointed school principals

In Estonia, in 2006, the Ministry of Education and Research initiated a project called "The competency model of school principals and the competency-model-based in-service training programme". The project resulted in a competence framework and an in-service training programme to support the competences outlined in the model.

With the support of structural funds, a pilot training programme for 10 school leadership teams was organised (each school had 3 members – the principal and 2 members of school leadership team).

Currently, trainings to local and regional school leaders are being provided. The topics include a variety of themes from conflict resolution, development of pupils' values, inclusive leadership, personnel development and evaluation to labour laws and learning organisation.

7.2 Distributed leadership/ teachers' leadership

Strengthening the leadership and the sense of ownership in all members of the school as a community, and encouraging teacher leadership are important ways to motivate teachers to produce better results and to become the driving force of the school's movement towards its learning goals.

This is currently the weakest area of teacher policies in most countries, with very few cases of government-level policies explicitly promoting teachers' leadership and offering policy support and resources for this purpose. In most countries, teacher leadership programmes either do not exist, or are run by NGOs as part of international donor projects in a handful of schools, and do not seem to have a system-wide effect.

An important exception is the availability of teachers' leadership programmes in Western Balkan countries, where NEPC members involve teachers in leadership programmes (e.g. in Bosnia and Herzegovina). In Serbia, emphasis on leadership is reflected in policy documents.

Teacher Leadership policy and training in Serbia

The Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia 2020 promotes the practice of teacher leadership or distributed leadership in schools.

The Catalogue of programmes of professional development 2012-2014 offers a programme "Teachers as leaders - empowering teachers for leading change in the educational process"(Centre for Interactive Pedagogy). This programme is the result of the cooperation with the International Teacher Leadership (ITL) network, launched by the Leadership for Learning group at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education in 2008.

A number of schools from Serbia have had the opportunity to learn about and practice teacher-led development work (TLDW) methodology, participate in the network meetings and share experiences since 2010.

7.3 Rewarding school principals for performance: lack of incentives

No policy-level support for incentives or rewards for school principals for achieving high standard of performance exists in any of the countries in the study, with the possible partial exception of Georgia, where the rewards are non-monetary.

This points to a gap between the emerging perceptions that school principals have a managerial role (as per competence frameworks in several countries), and a lack of incentives common for persons in managerial positions. The hypothetical reason why this may be so could be that the role of the school principal is still seen primarily as that of an official responsible for maintaining the normative adherence of his or her school to the existing requirements, rather than a manager or team leader. This is further illustrated by examples in the next sub-section.

7.4 Principals as teaching advisors and evaluators

In the majority of countries in the study, the school principals' role in providing guidance to the teachers on teaching issues is relatively weak and not outlined in official policies. A striking example of this is the situation in Slovakia: since the core part of the curriculum is set by the state, most of the curriculum and teaching related tasks are defined at state level too (by the State Pedagogic Institute). The school principal is only responsible for the adherence to the state curriculum but is not explicitly required to provide guidance to teachers in this regard.

An important exception is presented by the Western Balkan countries of Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia, where principals' responsibility for guidance and teaching quality assurance is stipulated at least at the general level (in laws and/ or bylaws).

In Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia, principals are also officially responsible for evaluating teachers' work. In Slovakia, this legal requirement exists as well, but in practice, evaluation is mostly performed by deputy principals, with principals having the final say in evaluation and remuneration.

8 Evaluation and monitoring

8.1 Monitoring of students' performance and its uses to inform teaching

Teachers in all countries have to perform student assessment, either summative or formative. However, not in all countries included in the study initial teacher education (ITE) includes a clear guidance of how to assess students' progress. In many cases, introduction to assessment methods in initial teacher education is theoretical and no definitive skills in student assessment are developed during training. In some countries, CPD programmes on assessment exist that possibly compensate for the weakness of ITE on this point. In practice, in most countries, teachers have considerable discretionary power in how to assess their students.

The use of national-level testing results and the results of international comparative studies to monitor performance is uneven and reveals a set of problems connected with the lack of a coherent monitoring policy in most countries. Some countries (e.g. Bosnia) only participate in very few international studies (not regularly) and have no centralised testing – thus, no overall picture of the progress of students' outcomes is possible to obtain.

Examples of incompleteness of monitoring policy leading to lack of transparency or abuses from national reports are mentioned below:

- The results of centralised testing in secondary schools were used to punish school principals rather than to develop measures to support under-performing schools (Georgia);
- The results of national centralised tests (NCT) are open and can be used to monitor learning outcomes, but no state level monitoring system has been developed, and assessment of the schools' performance is random (Kyrgyzstan).

Student assessment findings are not used to provide guidance to underperforming teachers and schools in a systematic manner in any of the countries in the study.

8.2 Teacher evaluation

Teachers are evaluated in all countries in the study except Kyrgyzstan where the old teacher evaluation process has been interrupted in 2011 and a new system is still being developed, and in Georgia where the new Teachers' Professional Development scheme has not yet entered into force.

Nevertheless, the existence of general requirements for teacher evaluation does not imply that the evaluation process is systematic, balanced and regular. Examples of some deficiencies of approaches to teacher evaluation from national reports are cited below:

Each canton/entity/district has specific by-laws that regulate evaluation of teacher's performance, conducted by pedagogical institutes (counsellors and/or inspectors), but only where those institutions exist. Each teacher has to be visited once in every two years in order to get scored (ranging from not satisfactory, satisfactory, good, to excellent). However, teachers are not provided with sufficient guidance, feedback or support after evaluation, and evaluations are not based on quality standards. (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Evaluation of teachers is at the discretion of their direct superiors (deputy principals or principals), and no other stakeholders except State School Inspection are involved in evaluation (Slovakia).

A rather balanced approach to teacher evaluation, placing it within the framework of overall school evaluation, exists in Serbia:

Teacher evaluation as part of school evaluation

In Serbia, self-evaluation of schools is conducted every year in certain areas, and overall, every four or five years. It is a joint action of the professional school bodies, parents' council, students' parliament, principal and school board, done through a combination of diverse techniques like observation, interviews, surveys, scaling, testing and documentation analysis.

Key evaluated areas are: school programme and annual school action plan, teaching and learning, students' achievement, support to students, ethos, resources, management, organisation and quality assurance.

External evaluation is done by educational advisors once in five years, according to the plan of the Ministry. It includes the analysis of self-evaluation report, school programme, annual work plan, school development plan and report of the pedagogical advisor; direct observation of teaching and other forms of educational work; interview with the principal, professional associate, teachers and educators, students, parents and other stakeholders.

Pedagogical advisors' school visits consist of at least 40 percent of direct communication with the teachers and at least 20 minutes of class observation. The advisors observe classroom practice and analyse assessment record and other documents prescribed by the Rulebook for student assessment, documents for preparation of the lesson and operational plans.

Teacher's class work performance is estimated in the context of defined standards. For each of these standards, a set of performance indicators is defined. The evaluator grades teacher's performance from 1 to 4 (1- unfulfilled standard, if less than 3 indicators are present, 4 - fully achieved standard, all indicators met).

Assessment of teachers' performance is part of the report about the overall quality of the school.

The participation of external stakeholders (e.g. professional associations) in teacher evaluation is a significant step towards making the evaluation a part of the larger framework of quality assurance guided by professionalism. Of the countries included in this study, only in Estonia professional communities play a significant role in teacher evaluation (the attestation process). The attestation commissions established by schools for awarding senior teacher qualification is required to include representatives of subject, professional or educational associations. The representatives of professional communities are also part of the attestation commission established by the Minister of Education and Research for awarding teacher-methodologist qualification (above the senior teacher qualification).

The role of local education authorities in evaluation and monitoring varies from country to country, but only in Estonia local authorities as founders of the schools seem to have a special role in monitoring school performance. In Bosnia, due to the federal governance structure, all evaluation and monitoring functions (if any) are exercised at cantonal/ unit/ district level.

9 Supporting teachers

Continuing professional development (CPD) is an important element in teachers' exercise of their profession, aimed at maintaining professionalism and equipping teachers with new approaches and methods or sharpening the existing ones.

Some requirements concerning participation in CPD exist in all of the countries in this study. However, only in a minority of countries the minimum number of hours of CPD required per year or several years is defined:

Country	Statutory requirement to participate in CPD	Minimal number of hours / days of CPD required per defined period of time
Azerbaijan	Yes	Not defined
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Yes	Not defined
Croatia	Yes	15 hours per year
Estonia	Yes	160 hours in 5 years
Georgia	Only for certified teachers	Not defined
Kyrgyzstan	Yes	72 hours in 5 years
Macedonia	Yes	Not defined
Mongolia	Yes	10 + 3 days
Slovakia	Yes	Not defined
Serbia	Yes	100 hours in 5 years

The table above illustrates the relative inefficiency of the statutory requirement for CPD in the majority of countries. While CPD is, as a rule, required as obligatory, only in 4 countries out of 9 is the minimum number of hours of CPD defined. Attitude towards the requirement for continuing professional development can be remarkably relaxed even in EU countries – thus, in Slovakia, only the 'adaptive education' module for novice teachers is seriously monitored, while for other teachers in practice CPD is voluntary.

Requirements related to teachers' CPD a not real pre-requisite for teachers to remain in their position, as in no country in the study is the termination of a teacher's contract as a result of not attending CPD directly envisaged.

In all of the countries in the study, some funds for teachers' professional development are available at government, local and school level, and in most cases, teachers are not expected to pay for their continuing development themselves.

In all of the countries in the study except for Kyrgyzstan and Slovakia, CPD in some form or other promotes collaborative practices. In some countries (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia), while the

opportunity to learn and improve teachers' professionalism through collaborative practices exists, no high value is placed on it by government policies.

In Estonia, the programme "Increasing Qualification of Teachers in General Educational Schools, Updating Their Skills" (2008-2013) facilitates teacher networks for professional development. The programme activities include mapping or creating a conceptual basis for teacher professional networks. The materials for self-evaluation for professional development were created. Networks have created opportunities for teachers to share their concerns, discuss curriculum and share best practices.

In most countries, CPD does not provide widely available opportunities for analysing teaching practices.

10 Conclusions

A brief comparative analysis of teacher policies in ten countries presented in this study gives only an introductory overview of the complexities faced by members of the teaching profession in these countries.

Overall, it illustrates several common challenges that may be jointly addressed through collaboration by researchers, education practitioners and policy makers from these countries.

- Poor link between the policy framework level and the implementation level affecting teaching practices. While most countries have the main requirements setting clear expectations regarding teachers' duties, learning outcomes, ITE and CPD requirements in place, many of them do not have the underpinning support of bylaws, funding schemes and communities of practice that would make these legal norms a reality in the classroom.
- Lack of competence standard frameworks for teachers and school principals that could guide quality assurance in the field and provide a basis for the development of coherent teacher education programmes from initial education to induction period and through continuous professional development.
- Lack of ownership. Currently, it seems that the ownership of education reforms and the changes they introduce in requirements for teachers is still with the policy makers, not with schools, teachers' associations, principals and teachers, or wider school communities. The strictly circumscribed role of the principal is more that of a public official ensuring adherence to regulations and less that of a team leader or manager.
- Lack of participatory approach to improving professionalism of teachers. The lack of emphasis on or incentives for teacher leadership, as well as poor involvement of professional communities in the evaluation of teachers are clear signs that current policies are not geared towards developing communities of practice as a driving force for improving professional standards.
- Lack of reflective approach. Absence of opportunities for analysing teaching practices in CPD, rare use of self-assessment in teacher evaluations, lack of resources allocated to studies and monitoring, all point in the direction of persistent deficit of reflection and evidence that should guide the improvement of teaching policies and practices.

  All or almost all countries in the study could benefit from the following improvements in the area of teacher policies and practice:

  1. Stronger professional associations and other forms of self-organisation of teachers who can focus not only on defending teachers' interests as a professional group, but can do much more – e.g. set high professional standards and require that both teachers and policy makers maintain those.
  2. Stronger communities of practice, supporting teaching and learning, reflecting on practices and improving them and promoting and spreading good practice and innovation.
  3. Clear and realistic bylaws, guidelines and funding for implementing curriculum reforms and other reforms that concern teaching.

4. More advanced and regular research on teaching and learning, including teacher education and training in the countries of the region, to provide evidence for making, implementation and review of teacher policies.
5. Stronger link between reform requirements and funding, including incentives for teachers and schools, and a clear career advancement path for teachers with available infrastructure for qualifying for next career stages.
6. Better use of data for monitoring students' progress and informing teaching practice and participatory evaluation mechanisms for establishing clear standards of good practice within the teaching profession.
7. Greater autonomy for teachers and schools, with clear performance requirements and incentives set by national policies.