

НАУКОВІ ДОПОВІДІ

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS TRAINING ALL AROUND EUROPE

In recent years, many national governments have introduced initiatives to encourage Europeans to build up their language skills in line with established EU policies on the importance of language learning. These initiatives were emphasised collectively during the European Year of Languages in 2001. Language schools and/or language learning centres operate in all countries and provide courses for all levels of ability. Teachers in these contexts may not have received formal training as teachers.

They are frequently native speakers of foreign languages, possibly with qualifications in teaching their own or another language to non-native adult learners.

A range of flexible delivery options is available for language students including distance learning by correspondence and email, study abroad projects, evening classes and short courses.

Eurybase reports indicate that the opportunities for teachers to advance their careers are extremely limited in many of the countries studied.

These include the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland and Poland. In contrast, opportunities for advancement based on factors such as performance to date, length of service, willingness to work in difficult areas or «versatility» as employees and participation in inservice training are emphasised in France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Spain. Promotion is possible but not regulated on a national level in Iceland, Latvia, Norway, Sweden and Great Britain.

UK. In some cases, length of service and participation in inservice training may lead to pay more. increases. However, this does not occur systematically across the continent.

When Europe is considered as a whole, there appears to be a degree of correlation between the national regulation of teaching

appointments, teachers' status as civil servants or otherwise, and opportunities for pay increases and promotion.

Initial teacher training is available in nearly 30 foreign languages in different countries. However, the degree of availability is highly varied. All countries offer training in teaching English, French and German (where they are not native languages).

Italian, Spanish and Russian are the next most widely available, being offered in more than half of the countries surveyed. Several countries offer teacher training in a range of less commonly studied languages (e.g. Asian languages), though in these cases the quantity of provision or take up is usually quite small.

As the specific focus of this study is on foreign languages, regional, minority and community languages have been deliberately omitted from this list. While the list has been compiled as carefully as possible, it should not be read as exhaustive. Localised training programmes may be available in additional languages in some cases.

The organisational and institutional structures provide a systematic framework, whose configuration determines much of what is required and what can be achieved in teacher training. Each country has its own specific system, responding to the national needs, history and traditions, and often playing a significant social and political role in the life of the country.

the country. Across the specificities, there are also common patterns, which are tending converge in response to common international pressures and the development of increased cooperation at European level and more widely. This article analyses the patterns of organisation of initial language teacher training for secondary education.

Secondary foreign language teachers are usually trained by universities or teacher training colleges. Within universities, training is normally the combined responsibility of two academic units: on the one hand Faculties or Departments of Education and on the other hand Faculties or Departments of Foreign Languages. In some cases, both groupings are located within the same grouping, such as a Faculty of Arts, Humanities or Social Sciences. But the degree of active co-operation between the units is extremely variable. This is an area in which improvements are needed.

There are three principal exceptions to this pattern. In France, training is carried out by the IUFM (Institut Universitaire de

Formation des Maîtres). These are national institutions affiliated to the Ministry of Education, which operate in collaboration with universities and specialize in training teachers. In the UK, alongside the traditional higher education routes into teaching, it is possible for teachers to be trained by school clusters or individual schools.

And in Liechtenstein, foreign language teachers are trained by institutions in neighbouring countries.

There is a range of different training options available across Europe. Courses may be either in the first cycle of higher education (undergraduate or equivalent) or in the second cycle (postgraduate or equivalent). In several countries both alternatives exist and a distinction is made between training for teaching at upper and lower secondary level. Undergraduate teacher training generally lasts for four or five years, although three-year training programmes also exist in Austria and Belgium.

Postgraduate teacher training takes between one and two years and follows on from three or four-year undergraduate first degree studies, in which language studies are usually the main component.

A secondary school leaver's certificate is necessary for access to higher education in all countries surveyed. Many institutions offering undergraduate courses to prospective teachers expect them to sit an entrance examination. In countries with postgraduate provision, it is usual for the student to hold a first degree in the foreign language to be taught, in order to be granted access to the course. Several countries or individual institutions have additional selection on the basis of interview.

There is significant competition for places on initial teacher training courses in countries that do not experience problems of foreign language teacher supply. This is the case in France. The variety of training models existing across Europe is reflected in the diversity of qualifications available to prospective teachers.

The degree of integration or separation of academic and teacher training studies depends on the type of programme followed. Undergraduate routes into teaching are generally characterized by pedagogic and academic studies running concurrently, although this is not always true of practical components.

In postgraduate programmes, training takes place after the completion of academic subject studies. It is here that links with

subject studies appear least well sustained, and most in need of improved cooperation at institutional level.

Secondary teachers are expected to be trained subject specialists in all instances. However,

However, a distinction at lower secondary level (or upper primary) is made in Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania and Norway, where teachers are only required to have undertaken an element of foreign language specialization as part of their training.

It noteworthy that shortages of qualified specialist foreign language teachers have been found to exist in most of the preaccession countries and in the UK.

Initial teacher training in each country is usually coordinated by the Ministry of Education. In some instances, Ministries act in accordance with parliamentary legislation. In others, they are advised by bodies made up of representatives from higher education institutions. Several countries have set up agencies with specific responsibility for overseeing the training of teachers and making recommendations to Ministries and to the training providers. Examples of this include the Teacher Training Agency in the UK (England & Wales) and the Standing Committee of Teacher Training in Hungary.

Where such agencies exist, there is evidence that they appear to be valued for their high degree of focus on the issues of teacher training and for their close contact with teacher trainers and schools. Coordination in Germany follows a slightly different pattern because of its federal structure. The Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the 16 Lander have responsibility for training, but the Standing Conference of Ministers aims to provide coordination at a national level.

Several countries insist on a trial or probationary period of teaching at the conclusion of which newly qualified teachers are required to present a report or, in some cases, sit further examinations. This system is used in France, Germany, Italy, Romania, Sweden and Great Britain. UK.A probationary period also affects the promotion of teachers to civil servant status in Austria and Germany.

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