

21st Century European Teachers

Report on the regulatory frameworks and
challenges/priorities of teacher education
& training across Europe

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
TEACHERS IN EUROPE	6
INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION	8
Regulatory frameworks for ITE	12
Croatia.....	12
Cyprus	12
Denmark	13
Finland	13
Italy	13
Slovakia	13
Spain	13
Switzerland	14
Romania.....	14
Priorities for teacher education.....	14
Challenges for teacher education.....	17
IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING	20
Induction into the teaching profession.....	20
Continuing professional development.....	22
Regulatory frameworks for teacher training	22
Croatia.....	23
Cyprus	23
Denmark	23
Finland	23
Italy	24
Romania.....	24
Slovakia	24

Spain	25
Switzerland	25
Priorities for teacher training	26
Challenges for teacher training.....	28
COUNTRY CARDS - 21ST CENTURY EUROPEAN TEACHERS PROJECT	31
Denmark	32
Finland	33
Italy	34
Romania.....	36
Spain	37
CONCLUSION	39
REFERENCES	40

INTRODUCTION

The overall objective of the [21st Century European Teachers](#) project is to gain insight into how European teachers can approach and develop teaching in emerging subject matter areas that arise as a result of large complex upheavals affecting society, e.g., climate change and the ubiquitous digital development.

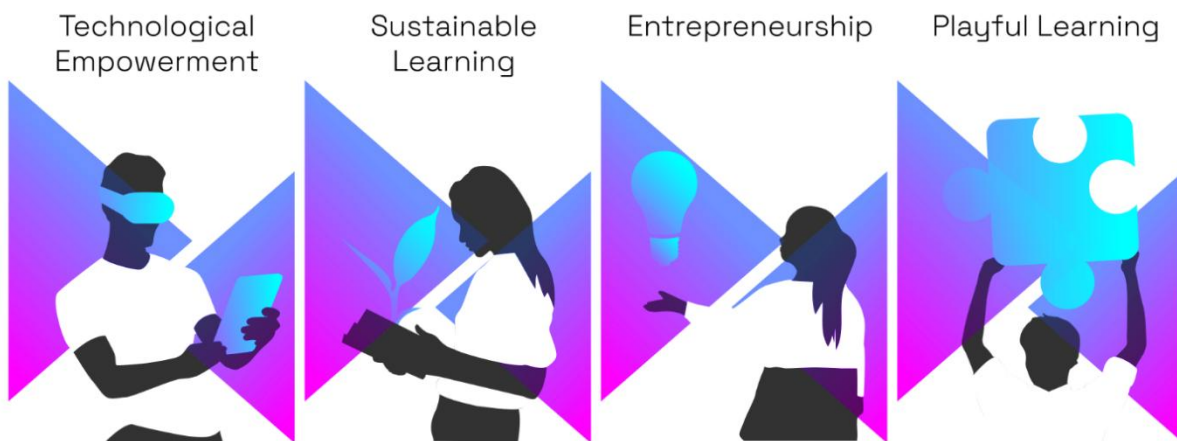


Figure 1 - The four emerging subject areas that the project addresses.

The first step in achieving this ambitious goal is to lay the groundwork for a common understanding of the participating countries' school systems, teacher education, further education options, and teacher training needs within the four subject areas. This includes the options for pre- and in-service teachers to engage in mobility to learn from practices in other countries.

The research methodology enacted for this purpose is highly participatory, enabling different educational actors from five European countries – Denmark, Finland, Italy, Romania and Spain – to express their views and reflections, and to showcase academic and professional practices in relation with the four central themes of the project, concurrently supporting the articulation of initial teacher education (ITE) and continuous professional development (CPD) in the respective educational contexts.

This report provides information on the structure of ITE, CPD and support measures from Eurydice reports 2021, 2023, Talis 2018, European Commission and Council documents, additionally information are collected through European Schoolnet's network from Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, and Switzerland. Information was collected during spring 2025.

This deliverable contributes to a mapping of frameworks for teachers' education (initial teachers' education - ITE) and teachers' continuous professional development (CPD) by identifying the requirements and regulations across Europe.

TEACHERS IN EUROPE

Teachers are the most important driving force in the learning journey of their pupils, and they bear the critical task of transforming the educational experience into one that is fulfilling and satisfying. Nevertheless, the teaching profession has been going through a vocational crisis, which has resulted in a decrease in the number of young people entering the profession and a loss of experienced educators who are already working in the field. The primary reason for this is that education professionals are being subjected to an ever-increasing number of demands, duties, and expectations. Reforms and new regulations are required in a variety of areas, including beginning teacher education, working conditions, career frameworks, and teacher evaluations (European Commission, 2021). Initial teacher education and their continuous professional development may help in those critical areas.

Initial teacher education (ITE) in Europe refers to the formal programmes and processes through which prospective teachers acquire the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for teaching in schools. These programmes typically combine academic study at universities or teacher training institutions with practical experience in schools, often through supervised teaching placements. While the structure and content of ITE vary across European countries, they are generally aligned with national education standards and the European Qualifications Framework. The aim is to ensure that new teachers are well prepared to meet the diverse needs of learners, adapt to evolving educational contexts, and contribute to the quality and equity of education systems across Europe.

Teachers' CPD comprises the in-service training undertaken throughout teachers' careers that allow them to broaden, develop, and update their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It may be formal or non-formal and includes both, subject-based and pedagogical training (OECD, 2016). Teachers' CPD is a vital precondition for quality teaching and teachers' evolution as professionals. Their participation in formal continuing training should be supported and encouraged. That is why, having professional development opportunities is one of the core objectives of the European Education Area (European Commission, 2021).

Initial teacher education (ITE) and induction are the first steps of the continuing process of teachers' professional development. The European Commission handbook on induction states that 'becoming a teacher should be seen as a gradual process including initial teacher education, the induction phase and continuing professional

development (European Commission Staff Working Document SEC(2010); [Programmes for Beginning Teachers. A handbook for policymakers](#)).

Written laws, guidelines, rules, orders, or recommendations that are formed by governmental or authoritative entities to guide and control the activities of individuals, schools, and other organisations that fall under the responsibility of teachers' initial education and continuing professional development are the laws, guidelines, rules, and recommendations that regulate teachers' education and training. These regulations are typically published in official papers and serve as a framework for guaranteeing conformity between the actions that are carried out and the norms or requirements that are imposed by the law.

In addition to teaching, teachers are required to undertake several responsibilities, including administrative jobs, organisational planning, student evaluation, extracurricular activities, continuing professional development, and engagement with parents, students, and other stakeholders. The Council conclusions of 26 May 2020 on [European teachers and trainers for the future](#) acknowledge that teachers face more demanding duties, obligations, and expectations from learners, institutional leaders, policymakers, parents, and communities. Balancing many facets of their job, while simultaneously enhancing and sustaining the quality of their instruction and students' learning results, can be tough. Comprehending how teachers allocate their time to fulfil various aspects of their responsibilities is essential for formulating policies that optimise their competence (European Commission, 2021). The following diagram (Figure 2) represents teacher workload and the distribution of their tasks. It is based on TALIS 2018 data related to teachers working full-time, and Eurydice data on official definitions of working time for lower secondary education teachers.



Figure 2 Proportion of time lower secondary education teachers report on activities related to their job, full-time teachers, EU level, 2018; Source: Eurydice 2021, on the basis of TALIS 2018.

Following ITE, a structured induction phase supports newly qualified teachers as they transition into the profession. This phase helps consolidate their knowledge and skills in real-world settings, offering personalised support to address early career challenges. Most European education systems now include such induction programmes (European Commission, 2023). Both European and national policymakers emphasise the importance of high-quality ITE and induction, recognising their impact on student outcomes. The Council of the European Union has repeatedly highlighted the need for comprehensive teacher education, including mentoring and support for novice teachers, to enhance the profession's appeal and effectiveness.

Mainstream Initial Teacher Education programmes can be categorised into two primary models: concurrent and sequential. Concurrent programs are specifically designed for ITE from inception, including general academic subjects in conjunction with professional subjects. Consecutive models encompass programs in which students, having completed higher education in certain disciplines, proceed to professional teacher training in a subsequent phase. The advantages and disadvantages of these models have been extensively highlighted and articulated in the literature. The concurrent approach of Initial Teacher Education is typically regarded as facilitating a more cohesive learning experience. The sequential programs are typically regarded as providing a more adaptable pathway to obtaining a teaching certificate, as they permit the professional decision to be deferred until a later phase of the training (European Commission, 2021).

In the EU, 54.9 % of teachers report holding a master's degree, while 38.0 % of teachers stated a bachelor's degree as their highest qualification. Few teachers hold an advanced research qualification. At EU level, 2.7 % of lower secondary teachers indicated that they have finished a PhD programme. Finally, 4.5 % of teachers in the EU have reported to be qualified at a level below Bachelor (ISCED 6). Source: Eurydice, on the basis of TALIS 2018

The fact that potential teachers should gain not only subject knowledge but also professional skills while they are at university has been repeatedly emphasised in policy documents published by the European Union that have been in circulation for quite some time. It was accepted by the [Council of the European Union in 2014](#) that subject(s) knowledge and professional skills are essential components of effective initial teacher education.

The [Communication from the European Commission](#) on school development and effective teaching emphasised that quality ITE should include subject knowledge, pedagogical theory, and sufficient classroom practice.

Professional training, as understood here, is a part of ITE that provides prospective teachers with both the specific theoretical knowledge and practical skills for the teaching profession. In-school placement is an integral part of professional training that can include observation of teaching and sometimes teaching itself. Usually, it is an unremunerated practical training in a real working environment that can be integrated at different stages of ITE programme(s).

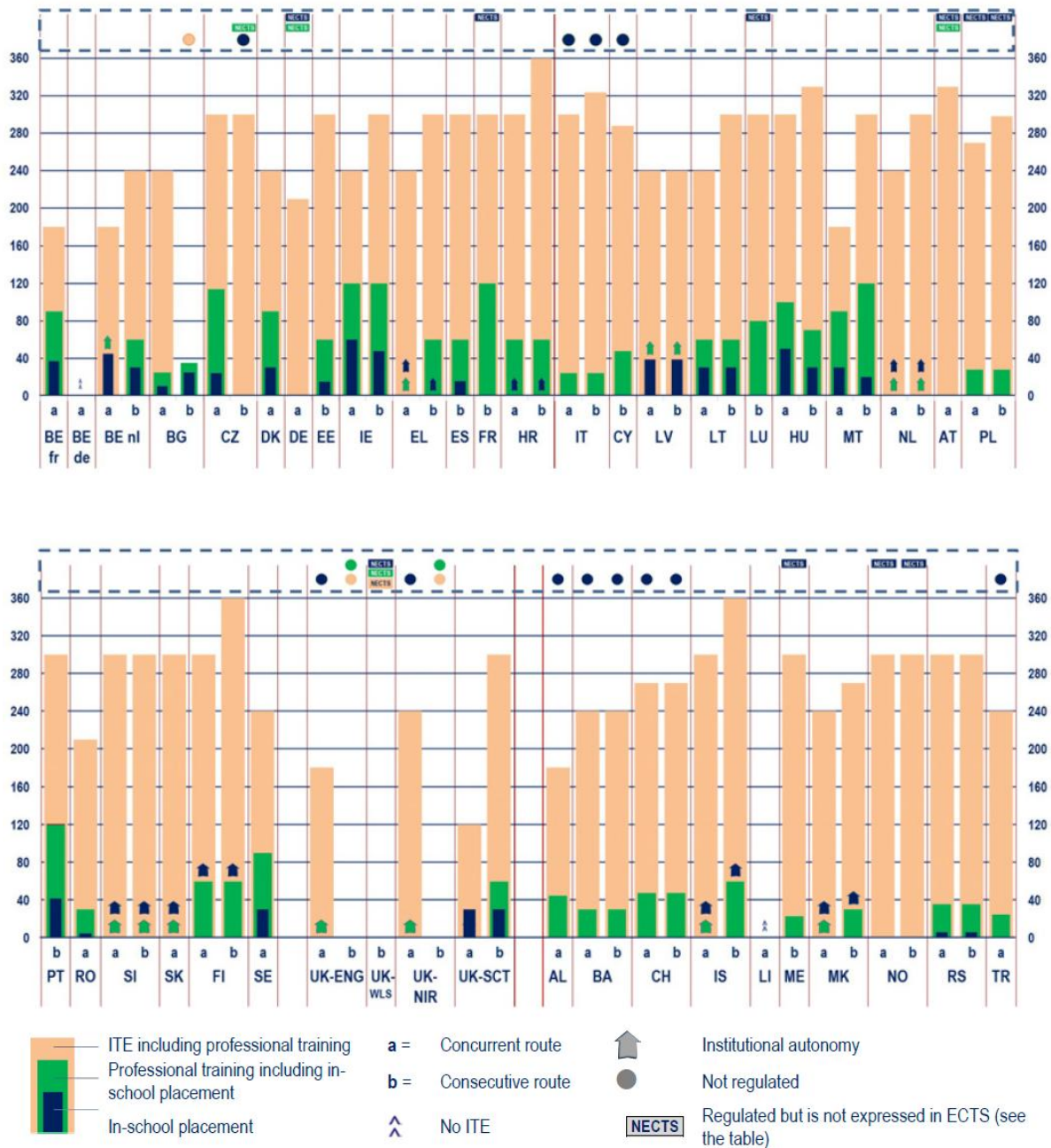


Figure 4 Minimum duration of ITE, professional training and in-school placement (in ECTS), in lower secondary education, 2019/20.

Figure 4 shows that almost all education systems require professional training to be included in ITE programmes. In most European education systems, there are regulations in place that define a minimum duration for the professional training component of initial teacher education. However, in some countries or systems ITE institutions have the autonomy to determine the proportion of professional training within their programmes (see Table 1). There is considerable variation across countries in how much of the ITE programme is dedicated to professional training. For instance, in Belgium (French Community), Ireland, and Malta, professional training constitutes around

50% of the total programme duration. In contrast, countries such as Italy and Montenegro allocate as little as 8%. Similarly low proportions—15% or less—are found in Bulgaria, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia, where the overall duration of professional training is also among the shortest.

The regulation of in-school placements, a key element of professional training, also varies widely. In about half of European education systems, the duration of these placements is formally regulated, while in others, it is left to the discretion of the training institutions or not regulated at all. Where regulation exists, the required length of placements differs significantly—from 60 ECTS credits in Ireland to just 5 ECTS in Romania.

In some member states practical training accounts for approximately half of the total time allocated to professional training (see

Table 1).

On-the-job training	
Italy	8,0%
Poland	10,4%
Bulgaria	10,4%
Romania	14,3%
Cyprus	16,7%
Estonia	20,0%
Spain	20,0%
Croatia	20,0%
Finland	20,0%
EU	24,5%
Lithuania	25,0%
Luxembourg	26,7%
Hungary	33,3%
Denmark	37,5%
Sweden	37,5%
Czechia	38,0%
France	40,0%
Portugal	40,0%
Belgium (fr)	50,0%
Ireland	50,0%

On-the-job training	
Malta	50,0%
Belgium (nl)	Institutional autonomy
Greece	Institutional autonomy
Latvia	Institutional autonomy
Netherlands	Institutional autonomy
Slovenia	Institutional autonomy
Slovakia	Institutional autonomy
Germany	Regulated but not expressed as a share
Austria	Regulated but not expressed as a share

Table 1 Minimum length of professional training (including in-school placement) as a share of minimum duration of ITE for lower secondary education (2019-20). Source: [European Commission calculations based on Eurydice data](#) (2021)

Regulatory frameworks for ITE

This chapter provides information collected through European Schoolnet’s network from Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland in spring 2025.

Regulatory frameworks for teacher education are very similar in all participating countries. Usually there is main Law regulating education, with supporting regulations for different levels of education (primary, secondary, vocational, higher, adult education). Teacher education is organised on the universities with different level of minimal requirements (at least 180 ECTS). Here are some details for participating countries.

Croatia

Law on education in primary and secondary schools ([Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju](#)), Law on Vocational Education ([Zakon o strukovnom obrazovanju](#)); The Act on the Croatian Qualification Framework ([Zakon o hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru](#)).

Cyprus

Initial Teacher Education is offered by universities [Αρχική - Πρόγραμμα Παιδαγωγικής Κατάρτισης Υποψήφιων Εκπαιδευτικών Λειτουργών Μέσης Εκπαίδευσης \(ucy.ac.cy\)](#)

Denmark

Main [Regulatory framework for the teacher education in Denmark](#) supported with the [example of Teacher educations study plan from Aarhus](#) and information about [current reform of teacher education](#).

Finland

Legislation and Acts defining teacher education and teacher qualifications: Teacher Education Act ([844/1971](#)), Early Childhood Education Act ([540/2018](#)), Basic Education Act ([628/1998](#)), Decree on the Qualifications of Educational Staff ([986/1998](#)). Additional information: [Teacher Education Development Programme 2022–2026](#), Combining Research and Practice: [An Inside Look at Finland’s Teacher Training Schools](#), [Core Teacher Education and Induction](#).

Italy

The latest regulations affecting teacher education include [Law 79/2022](#), which reformed the training and recruitment process for secondary school teachers, and [Decree 249/2010](#), which lays out the general framework for primary and secondary teacher training. The Italian Ministry of Education (MIUR) oversees these programs and provides guidelines on mandatory components and credit requirements. Additional information [Centre for Teaching and Learning of the University of Bologna](#).

Slovakia

[Act No. 138/2019](#) Coll. Act on Pedagogical Employees and Professional Employees and on Amendments to Certain Acts; [Act No. 131/2002](#) on Higher Education Institutions: This act governs higher education institutions in Slovakia, including universities that provide teacher education programs. It defines the structure, accreditation, and quality assurance of higher education. [Act No. 245/2008](#) on Education (School Act): This comprehensive law covers various aspects of the education system in Slovakia, including the curriculum, organization of schools, and the roles of teachers.

Spain

Teacher’s initial education is defined *as a basis* in the following regulations to date. The information applies to all educational jurisdictions: For 2nd cycle of ECEC: [article 92 of the Organic Law, 3/2020, amending the Organic Law, 2/2006, of education](#) and [BOE 312 de 29/12/2007 Sec 1 Pag 53735 a 53738](#). For Primary Education: [article 93 of the Organic Law, 3/2020, amending the Organic Law, 2/2006, of education](#) and [BOE-A-2007-22449 Orden ECI/3857/2007, de 27 de diciembre, por la que se establecen los requisitos para la verificación de los títulos universitarios oficiales que habiliten para el ejercicio de la profesión de Maestro en Educación Primaria](#). For upper

stages (compulsory secondary education, upper secondary & VE): [articles 94 to 98 of the Organic Law, 3/2020, amending the Organic Law, 2/2006, of education](#) and [Order EDU/3498/2011](#) amending [Order ECI/3858/2007](#).

Switzerland

On the basis of the 1993 [Intercantonal Agreement on the Recognition of Diplomas](#), the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) recognises the qualifications awarded by university study programmes that qualify graduates to become teachers or to pursue a career in special needs education. These lay down minimum requirements for [Recognition regulation for teaching diplomas](#).

Romania

[Pre-University Education Law no. 198/2023](#) and [Higher Education Law no. 199/2023](#). Ministry of Education Order [No. 4139/2022](#) of June 29, 2022, regarding the approval of the Methodology for organizing the psycho-pedagogical training program for the certification of the competences for the teaching profession by the specialized departments within the accredited higher education institutions. Ministry of Education Order [no. 4524/2020](#) for establishing and organising the university didactic master's programs.

Priorities for teacher education

This chapter provides information collected through European Schoolnet’s network from Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, and Switzerland in spring 2025.

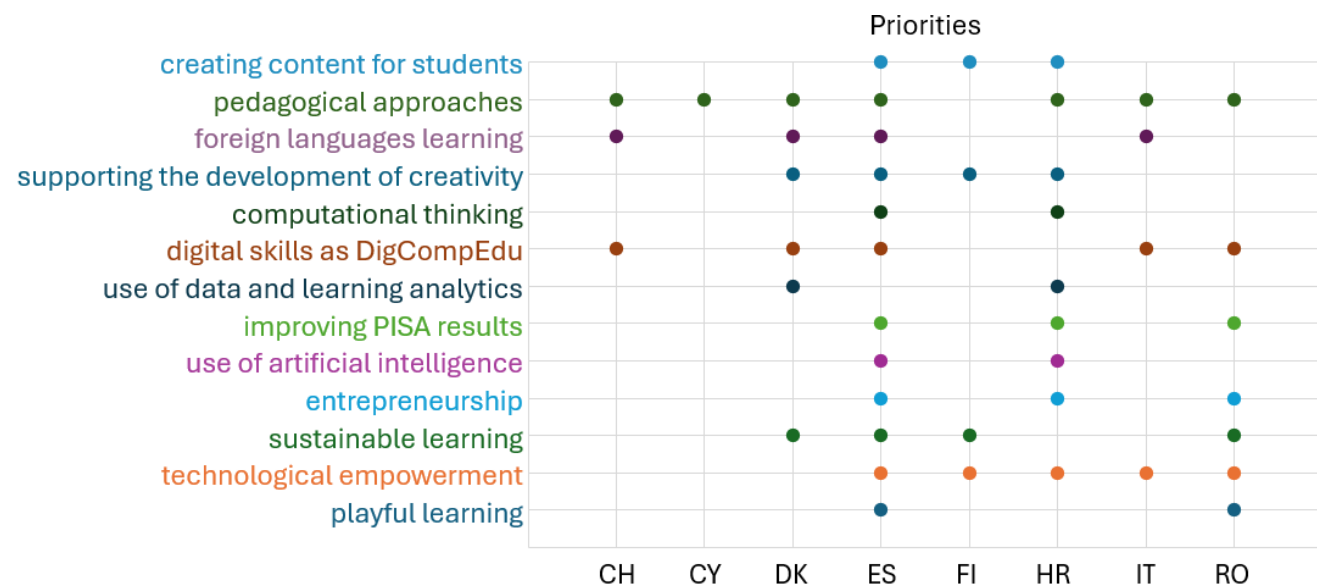


Figure 5 Priorities for teacher education (CH – Switzerland, CY – Cyprus, DK – Denmark, ES – Spain, FI – Finland, HR – Croatia, IT – Italy, RO – Romania).

The Pedagogical approach is the most widely shared priority, emphasised by nearly all participating countries (Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Denmark, Spain, Switzerland, and Romania). This reflects a strong commitment to enhancing teaching methods and strategies to better support diverse learners. Countries are focusing on modernising pedagogy to include more student-centred, inclusive, and evidence-based practices that foster deeper learning and engagement.

Digital skills aligned with the DigCompEdu framework are a key focus in several countries (Italy, Denmark, Switzerland, Spain and Romania). This priority highlights the importance of equipping teachers with the digital competencies necessary to effectively integrate technology into their teaching. The [DigCompEdu framework](#) provides a structured approach to developing these skills, ensuring that educators can confidently use digital tools to enhance learning outcomes.

Technological empowerment is another prominent theme, with multiple countries (Croatia, Italy, Finland, Spain and Romania) recognising the need to empower teachers through access to and understanding of educational technologies. This includes not only using digital tools but also fostering a mindset that embraces innovation and adaptability in the classroom.

Supporting the development of creativity is seen as essential in preparing students for a rapidly changing world. Countries prioritising this area aim to cultivate creative thinking in both teachers and students, encouraging experimentation, problem-solving, and the ability to generate original ideas across disciplines (Croatia, Finland, Spain and Denmark).

Sustainable learning is gaining traction as a priority, reflecting a growing awareness of the need to integrate sustainability into education. This involves teaching practices that promote environmental awareness, social responsibility, and long-term thinking, preparing students to contribute to a more sustainable future. It is priority in Finland, Denmark, Spain and Romania.

Foreign language learning is highlighted as a priority in four countries (Italy, Denmark, Spain and Switzerland), underlining the importance of multilingualism in a globalised world. Enhancing language education helps students develop communication skills, cultural awareness, and better opportunities for international collaboration and mobility.

Improving PISA results is a shared goal in Croatia, Spain and Romania, indicating a focus on raising student performance in international assessments. This often involves targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy, and science, as well as broader reforms to improve the quality and equity of education systems.

Entrepreneurship is being integrated into teacher education to foster a spirit of initiative and innovation among students. By equipping teachers with the tools to nurture entrepreneurial thinking, countries (Croatia, Spain and Romania) aim to prepare learners to be proactive, resilient, and capable of creating value in various contexts.

Use of data and learning analytics is also noted as becoming important in education. Croatia and Denmark are prioritising this aiming to training teachers to interpret and use data to inform instruction, personalise learning, and improve student outcomes through evidence-based decision-making.

Creating content for students is a practical priority that supports the development of tailored educational materials. Teachers are encouraged to design and adapt content that meets the specific needs of their learners, often using digital tools to enhance accessibility and engagement. It is in the focus in Croatia, Spain and Finland.

Computational thinking is recognised as a foundational skill in the digital age. By integrating this into teacher education, countries aim to help students develop logical reasoning, problem-solving abilities, and an understanding of how digital systems work, skills that are increasingly relevant across all disciplines. It is prioritised in Croatia and Spain.

Use of artificial intelligence in education is an emerging priority. Countries exploring this area are beginning to train teachers on how AI can support personalised learning, automate administrative tasks, and provide insights into student progress, while also addressing ethical considerations. It is mentioned only by Croatia and Spain.

Playful learning is uniquely prioritised by Romania and Spain, reflecting a belief in the power of play to enhance engagement, creativity, and holistic development. This approach encourages the use of games, exploration, and hands-on activities to make learning more enjoyable and effective.

Besides priorities presented on the Figure 5 participating countries also mentioned some other priorities, like analytical and problem-solving skills, interdisciplinary understanding ethical and civic values, cybernetics, renewable energy sources, robotics, ecology and food waste management.

Challenges for teacher education

No single challenge is mentioned by all countries in our research, however, there are a few challenges that are very common, appearing in multiple countries. The most frequently mentioned challenges are: Theory-practice gap (5 countries), Quality and consistency of training (5 countries), Curriculum reform and modernisation (4 countries), Digital competence and technological adaptation (4 countries), Attractiveness and accessibility of the profession (3 countries).

⌘ Theory-practice gap

- Cyprus, Denmark, Italy, Romania and Spain

A significant concern in teacher education is the persistent gap between theoretical instruction and practical classroom application. Countries such as Italy, Spain, Denmark, Cyprus, and Romania report that teacher training often leans heavily on academic theory, leaving future educators underprepared for the realities of teaching. Strengthening practical components, such as internships and school-based experiences, are seen as essential to bridge this divide. Aligning university-based education with the dynamic needs of schools ensures that new teachers are not only knowledgeable but also confident and competent in real-world settings.

⌘ Quality and consistency of training

- Croatia, Finland, Italy, Slovakia and Switzerland

Variability in the quality of teacher education is a concern shared by Italy, Slovakia, Finland, Switzerland and Croatia. Disparities among institutions, insufficient resources, and challenges in recruiting qualified lecturers contribute to inconsistent training experiences. In Finland, budget cuts have further strained the system, reducing opportunities for professional development and innovation. Ensuring high standards across all training institutions is crucial for maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of the teaching profession.

⌘ Curriculum reform and modernisation

- Cyprus, Finland, Romania and Slovakia

Modernising the curriculum to reflect contemporary educational needs is a shared priority. Romania, Slovakia, Cyprus and Finland are all engaged in reform efforts to update teacher education content and structure. Romania points out to the need for balance between the weight of specialized disciplines, general psychological and

pedagogical contents and teaching practice. These reforms aim to incorporate modern pedagogical approaches, respond to societal changes, and better prepare teachers for the evolving demands of the classroom. However, implementing such reforms effectively requires careful planning, adequate resources, and ongoing evaluation to ensure they meet their intended goals.

⌘ Digital competence and technological adaptation

- Finland, Italy, Romania and Switzerland

Across several countries, the integration of digital skills into teacher education has emerged as a pressing challenge. As classrooms increasingly incorporate digital tools and hybrid learning environments, teacher training programmes must evolve to equip future educators with the necessary technological competencies. Romania, Switzerland, Italy, and Finland all highlight the urgency of adapting curricula to include digital literacy and the effective use of educational technologies. This shift is not merely about using devices but about rethinking pedagogy to harness digital tools for inclusive, engaging, and effective teaching.

⌘ Attractiveness and accessibility of the profession

- Croatia, Denmark, Slovakia and Switzerland

Several countries are grappling with the declining appeal of the teaching profession. Slovakia reports low enrolment and poor academic performance among candidates, while Denmark aims to make teacher education more prestigious and sought-after. Switzerland emphasised the need to train enough teachers and pedagogical specialists to remedy the lack of teaching staff. Croatia mentions challenge of finding quality lecturers for teacher education. Addressing these issues requires not only improving the quality and relevance of teacher education but also enhancing the status, support, and working conditions of teachers to attract and retain talented individuals.

⌘ Inclusive and diverse education

- Finland and Italy

The ability to teach in diverse and inclusive classrooms is increasingly vital, yet many teacher education programmes fall short in this area. Italy and Finland specifically point to a necessity to prepare teachers to support students with special educational needs or from varied cultural backgrounds.

In Italy in 2010, [Law 170/2010](#) focused on students with specific learning disorders (DSA). It introduced tools and teaching methods designed to help each student reach their full potential, emphasising personalised and

individualised educational strategies. The [Decreto Inclusionione](#) (Inclusion Decree), first passed in 2017 and updated in 2019, represents the latest step in this educational evolution. More information available at [Asnor – Associazione Nazionale Orientatori](#).

As societies become more diverse, teacher training must incorporate strategies for inclusive education, cultural competence, and differentiated instruction. This ensures that all students, regardless of background or ability, receive equitable and effective education.

The challenges that are mentioned less often, by one country are: Scheduling and organisational barriers (Croatia), Legislative and structural reforms (Romania).

The need to modernise teacher education, whether through digital integration, curriculum reform, or bridging theory and practice is a strong underlying theme across nearly all countries.

IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

Induction into the teaching profession

A critical stage for educators and educational systems alike is the shift from initial teacher education to professional life. Here, "induction" refers to a systematic support period that lasts for a minimum of several months for newly qualified teachers. In this stage, teachers are compensated for their labour and perform all, or part of the duties expected of more seasoned educators. Important formative and supportive elements are included in induction; it often consists of extra training along with individualised guidance and support.

Furthermore, it serves as a probationary term before the recruitment is confirmed in certain educational systems. In several educational systems, completing the induction phase successfully is a requirement in order to receive a full teaching credential. (European Commission, 2021).

In most European countries, the induction phase for newly qualified teachers typically lasts one year. However, there are notable exceptions. In Spain and Cyprus, the induction period is shorter, lasting no more than six months. Conversely, in Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, and Norway, new teachers benefit from a two-year induction. In some systems, the duration of induction is not strictly defined, but official guidelines may set a timeframe within which it must be completed. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium and Slovakia, induction must be finalised within the first two years of teaching. In Ireland and Liechtenstein, it is expected to occur within the first three years of employment. Finland takes a more decentralised approach, allowing individual schools to determine the length of induction based on local needs (European Commission, 2021).

There are a number of components to mandatory induction for new instructors, which can take many forms and is subject to various regulations across Europe. While some of these components are mandated by higher-ups in official documents, others are up to individual school districts or municipalities.

Continuing professional development

Eurydice report reveals that European countries regulate teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) in different ways (Figure 7). The main contrast is between CPD as a professional duty with top-level documents and elective CPD activities with no obligation in top-level regulations (national government regulation). Continuing professional development activities, if specifically established in top-level regulations, are regarded as a professional duty of teachers. They are regarded optional if there is no statutory requirement in top-level policy documents. Figure 7 shows that in-service training is a professional duty in practically every European country. Only five countries—Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Turkey—make teacher participation in CPD optional. Furthermore, teachers' CPD is defined in terms of the time (e.g., mandatory, entitled) allotted to them in a variety of training activities. Mandatory continuing professional development requires teachers to complete a specific number of training activities over a set period of time. On the other hand, CPD defined as an entitlement relates to a specific amount of development time awarded within or outside of teaching (working) hours.



Figure 7 Status of lower secondary teachers' CPD by country in 2019/20 (Source European Commission, 2021).

In more than half of European countries, top-level regulations define a certain amount of time that is mandatory or available (as an entitlement) for each teacher to engage in CPD. There is no statutory obligation for teachers to participate in CPD in Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Turkey.

The days or hours of CPD that are considered mandatory, or an entitlement are normally included in the teachers' regular workload. This is especially the case for the CPD that is organised at school level. However, countries may also enable and encourage teachers to engage in other types of CPD that are organised outside the school. Top-level regulations (laws or collective agreements) may provide a possibility for a teacher to receive paid study leave. The data shows that most European countries offer a possibility for teachers to take paid study leave. Short periods of paid study leave (up to one week) are the most common.

Regulatory frameworks for teacher training

This chapter provides information collected through European Schoolnet's network from Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, and Switzerland in spring 2025.

Teachers' in-service training and continuous professional development are usually covered in main Educational Laws, mentioned in chapter about teacher education. Other aspects are covered in different regulations and policy documents from National agencies or Ministries.

Croatia

Professional training of teachers of vocational subjects within the framework of the [Agency for Vocational Education and Adult Education](#) and [Education and Teacher Training Agency](#) (e.g. [plan for 2025](#)). Croatian Academic and Research Network - CARNET has been continuously conducting teacher training for the development of digital competences and the application of digital technologies in education. All educational content developed as part of the "e-School" program, as well as other projects implemented by CARNET, are available for self-learners and can be reviewed and accessed on [CARNET's website](#).

Cyprus

Teachers' professional learning is one of the key policies of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth for the improvement of Cyprus education system. Based on official decisions of the Council of Ministers it is based on the following key pillars: The centre of the training is the school, and the official training body is the [Pedagogical Institute](#). Reflection is central to this process as a process of analysis of the action by the teacher, with the aim of improving professional practice.

Denmark

In Denmark teachers can enrol in large amount of continuous professional development. [In a mapping of continuing education opportunities for teachers from April 2024](#), 134 different programs have been identified as relevant for teachers, where individuals with a teaching degree meet the admission requirements. Teacher also has the opportunity to participate in courses at CFU – Centre for Teaching Materials, as an example, see the [CFU courses at VIA](#).

Finland

[Continuous professional development](#) programme emphasizes career-long professional and continuous learning. This includes regular in-service training and opportunities for teachers to update their skills and knowledge throughout their careers. [Teacher professional development](#) and [Teacher training](#) - Education Finland pages details the professional development opportunities for teachers in Finland, highlighting Finnish expertise.

Italy

In Italy, continuous professional development for teachers is regulated through several frameworks and policies. [National Teacher Training Framework](#): Italian law emphasizes continuous training as an essential part of teaching, which aligns with the broader objectives of lifelong learning. [Piano Nazionale di Formazione](#) (PNF), [Law July 13, 2015, No. 107](#), "Buona Scuola". More information are available on [SOFIA](#) The Ministry of Education's official portal for the management and delivery of professional development courses for teachers on emerging competencies, including digital, sustainability, and advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence.

Romania

[Pre-University Education Law no. 198/2023](#) and [Higher Education Law no. 199/2023](#)

Ministry of Education Order no. 4224/06.07.2022 for the approval [of the Framework Methodology](#) regarding the quality assurance of programs for the continuous professional development of teachers in pre-university education and the accumulation of transferable professional credits.

[Appendix no. 1 to the Framework Methodology approved by Order no. 4.224/06.07.2022](#): Clarifications regarding the accreditation of programs for continuous professional development intended for teaching staff in pre-university education, respectively for granting approval for placing a program in the category of complementary programs, Note no. 5.749/DGMRURS/16.12.2022 - [Specific procedure regarding the operationalization of methodological regulations regarding the accumulation by teaching staff of 90 transferable professional credits](#).

[The national registry](#) of accredited continuing professional development programs,

List of [national complementary programs](#).

The Strategic Project Professionalization of Teaching Career - PROF (Project ID: POCU / 904/6/25/146587), <https://www.eprof.ro/>

Slovakia

[Act No. 138/2019](#) Coll. Act on Pedagogical Employees and Professional Employees and on Amendments to Certain Acts; [Act No. 311/2001](#) Coll. Labour Code as amended; Decree of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic [No. 173/2023](#) Coll. on the qualification requirements of pedagogical employees and professional employees. Decree of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic [No. 361/2019](#) Coll. on Education in Professional Development. More information available at [National Institute of Education and Youth](#), and summary at the page of the Ministry of Education - [Continuous professional development](#).

Spain

The [LOE](#) and [LOMLOE](#) set a series of guidelines that must be respected by the Continuing professional development programmes offered by the education authorities responsible for planning and organising them in their jurisdiction. The information is presented for each of the educational jurisdictions. [Scope of the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports](#). For example Andalucía - [Resolución de 30 de septiembre de 2024, de la Dirección General de Innovación y Formación del Profesorado, por la que se aprueba el desarrollo de las líneas estratégicas de formación del profesorado establecidas en el III Plan Andaluz de Formación Permanente del Profesorado y las pautas de elaboración y desarrollo de los Proyectos de Formación para el curso 2024/2025. \(juntadeandalucia.es\)](#) and Illes Balears - [Decreto 41/2016, de 15 de julio, por el que se regula la formación permanente del profesorado de la enseñanza no universitaria de la Comunidad Autónoma de las Illes Balears](#).

Switzerland

There is no national regulation of the further training of teachers. This is the responsibility of the cantons. However, based on the [Regulations on the recognition of additional training qualifications for the teaching profession of 17 June 2004](#) for additional training, the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) board can issue a profile defining training-specific elements and the minimum scope of the additional training. This is done when a majority of the cantons are affected. So far, the EDK has issued profiles for the additional training of school management, for specialist teachers of career education, and for trainers at F3 level in the field of media education.

Priorities for teacher training

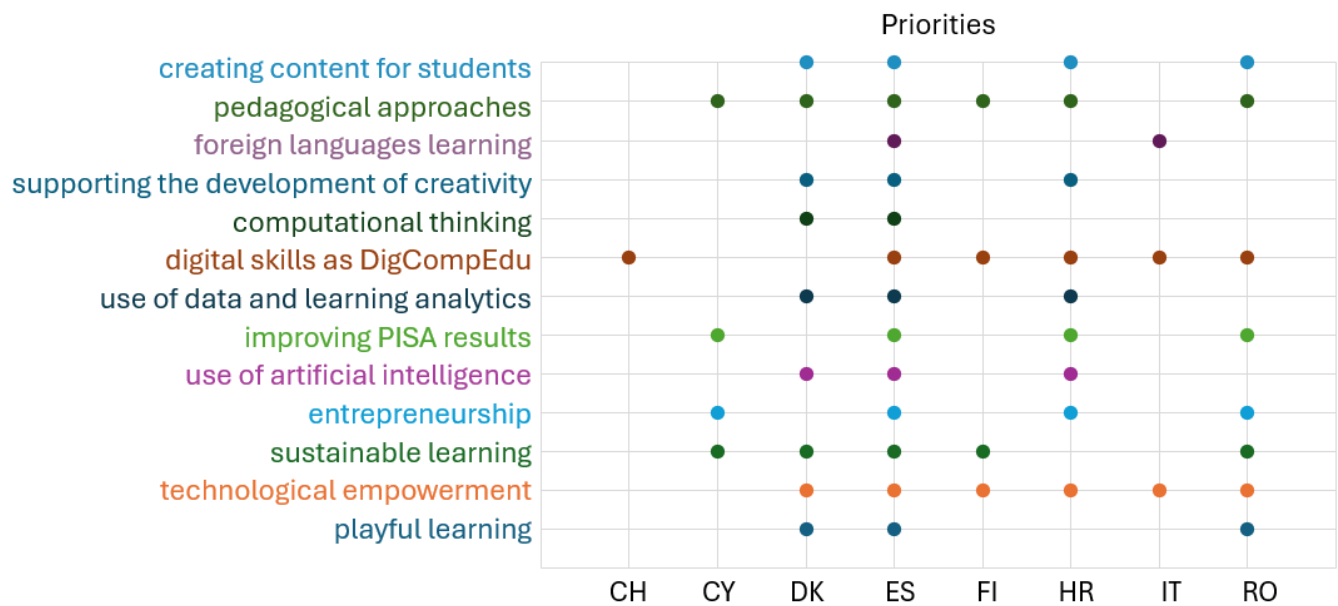


Figure 8 Priorities for teacher training

Pedagogical approaches are the most commonly shared priority, as underlined by numerous countries. This demonstrates a strong commitment to improving teaching methods and tactics to better serve different learners. Countries are focussing on modernising pedagogy by including more student-centred, inclusive, and evidence-based techniques that promote deeper learning and engagement. This is the case in Cyprus, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Croatia, and Romania.

Digital skills linked with the DigCompEdu framework are a top priority in various countries. This objective emphasises the necessity of providing teachers with the digital capabilities required to effectively integrate technology into their instruction. This is the case in Switzerland, Spain, Finland, Croatia, Italy, and Romania.

Another prevalent subject is **technological empowerment**, with many countries realising the importance of providing teachers with access to and understanding of educational technology. This requires not only employing digital technologies but also establishing a classroom culture that values creativity and adaptation. This is the case in Denmark, Spain, Finland, Croatia, Italy, and Romania.

Sustainable learning is becoming a priority, showing a rising recognition of the need to include sustainability into education. This includes educational methods that encourage environmental awareness, social responsibility, and long-term thinking. This is the case in Cyprus, Denmark, Spain, Finland, and Romania.

Entrepreneurship is being infused into teacher training to instil a sense of initiative and inventiveness among students. Countries hope to train students to be proactive and resilient by providing teachers with the skills necessary to foster entrepreneurial thinking. This is the case in Cyprus, Spain, Croatia, and Romania.

Some countries aim to improve student performance in international evaluations, such as **PISA**. This frequently includes focused interventions in reading, numeracy, and science. This is the case in Cyprus, Spain, Croatia, and Romania.

Creating content for students is a practical priority that facilitates the creation of specialised educational materials. Teachers are encouraged to create and alter content to fit the individual requirements of their students. This is the case in Denmark, Spain, Croatia and Romania.

Artificial intelligence is becoming an increasingly important tool in teaching. Countries researching this field are starting to train instructors on how AI may help with tailored learning and provide insights into student development. This is the case in Denmark, Spain, and Croatia.

The use of **data and learning analytics** is becoming more significant in education. Countries that prioritise this sector invest in training teachers to interpret and use data to inform instruction and tailor learning. This is the case in Denmark, Spain, and Croatia.

Supporting the development of creativity is regarded as critical in educating pupils for a continuously changing environment. Countries that prioritise this subject try to foster innovative thinking in both instructors and pupils. This is the case in Denmark, Spain, and Croatia.

A few countries promote **playful learning**, reflecting a belief in play's ability to increase engagement, creativity, and overall growth. This approach emphasises the use of games and hands-on activities. This is the case in Denmark, Spain, and Romania.

Computational thinking is seen as an essential skill in the digital age. Countries hope that by incorporating this into teacher education, pupils would be able to develop logical reasoning and problem-solving skills. This is the case in Denmark and Spain.

Foreign language acquisition is prioritised in some countries, emphasising the value of multilingualism in a globalised environment. Language education improves pupils' communication abilities and cultural awareness. This is the case in Spain and Italy.

Besides priorities presented on the Figure 8 participating countries also mentioned some other priorities, like wellbeing, health, and resilience, preparedness for curriculum reform, ability to develop learners' 21st century skills, induction of students with migrant background, student assessment, gender equality, working with students of the Roma national minority, cyber security, digital technology as support for special educational needs, inclusive

pedagogies, diversity management, civic education and active citizenship, STEM education, teaching and organizational autonomy, competency-based teaching and methodological innovation, connection between school and the workforce, continuous assessment and improvement.

Challenges for teacher training

No single challenge is explicitly mentioned by all participating countries, however, there are a few challenges that are very common, appearing in multiple countries. The most frequently mentioned challenges are Funding and resource limitations (4 countries), Integration of digital tools and technology (4 countries), Time constraints and workload (3 countries), Relevance and practicality of training content (3 countries).

⌘ Funding and resource limitations

- Denmark, Finland, Italy and Romania

Insufficient funding is a widespread challenge that affects the accessibility and quality of teacher training. Romania, Italy, Denmark, and Finland all cite financial constraints as a significant obstacle. In some cases, teachers must bear the cost of training themselves, while in others, budget cuts have drastically reduced the availability of professional development opportunities. Finland's complete elimination of its in-service training budget in 2024 is a stark example of how austerity measures can undermine educational quality. Sustainable investment in teacher training is crucial for long-term educational improvement.

⌘ Integration of digital tools and technology

- Croatia, Denmark, Finland and Italy

The rapid advancement of technology has made digital competence a critical component of modern teaching. Countries such as Italy, Croatia, Denmark, and Finland emphasise the need for teacher training programmes to equip educators with the skills to effectively integrate digital tools into their teaching practices. However, this transition is not without obstacles. Some teachers lack motivation or confidence in using technology, while others face gaps in training that leave them unprepared for digital instruction. As educational environments become increasingly tech-driven, ensuring that all teachers are digitally literate is essential for maintaining effective and engaging classrooms.

⌘ Time constraints and workload

- Croatia, Denmark and Finland

A major barrier to effective teacher training is the limited time teachers have for professional development. Croatia, Denmark, and Finland all report that teachers are often overwhelmed by their existing responsibilities, making it difficult to participate in training programmes, especially those requiring multiple days. In Finland, this issue is

compounded by rising workloads and stress levels, which not only hinder ongoing development but also contribute to burnout and attrition. Addressing time constraints requires more flexible training formats and institutional support to prioritise continuous learning.

Relevance and practicality of training content

- Croatia, Denmark and Romania

Ensuring that training content is relevant and practical is essential for its effectiveness. Romania, Croatia, and Denmark highlight the need for training programmes to be closely aligned with teachers' real-world needs and subject areas. In some cases, training is too generic or theoretical, failing to provide actionable strategies that teachers can apply in their classrooms. Tailoring content to specific disciplines, competency levels, and current educational challenges can significantly enhance the impact of professional development.

Inclusion and diversity

- Finland and Italy

As classrooms become more diverse, teacher training must evolve to prepare educators for inclusive teaching. Italy and Finland stress the importance of equipping teachers with strategies to support students from varied cultural, socio-economic, and ability backgrounds. This includes not only pedagogical techniques but also a mindset of equity and empathy. Inclusive training helps ensure that all students receive the support they need to thrive, regardless of their individual circumstances.

Career development and professional pathways

- Cyprus and Spain

Linking professional development to career progression and school improvement can enhance its relevance and motivation. Cyprus and Spain advocate for frameworks that connect training with teachers' career trajectories and institutional goals. This approach not only incentivises participation but also ensures that training contributes to broader educational outcomes. Structured pathways for advancement can make the teaching profession more attractive and rewarding.

Motivation and support

- Croatia and Cyprus

Motivating teachers to engage in training and providing them with ongoing support are critical for successful implementation. Croatia and Cyprus note that some teachers are reluctant to participate in training, particularly when it involves unfamiliar technologies or lacks immediate relevance. Moreover, without adequate support—such as access to mentors or technical assistance—teachers may struggle to apply new skills in their daily work. Building

professional learning communities and fostering a culture of continuous improvement can help address these challenges.

These challenges, though less frequently mentioned, are still significant and may reflect emerging or context-specific concerns in teacher training systems.

More information about continuous professional development, induction, mentoring experiences, innovative teaching practices, and students' assessment methods with a special emphasis on activities and capabilities related to the use of ICT in teaching you may find in the European Schoolnet's and IRVAPP's 2nd level analysis of TALIS 2018 data in the report: [Continuous professional development, professional capabilities and innovative teaching practices among European teachers](#).

COUNTRY CARDS - 21ST CENTURY EUROPEAN TEACHERS PROJECT

In this chapter we are summarising some of the information collected through our research on regulatory frameworks, challenges and priorities of teacher education and training for five countries partners in 21st century European Teachers project. Additional information is also available in the project other deliverables – eBook [Case studies of the teacher educations in the five partner countries](#) (D2.1) and [Research report](#) (D2.2).

	Collegial leadership	Autonomy	Actual teaching time	Societal appreciation	On-the-job training	Mentoring
Denmark	75.1 %	94 %	50 %	18.5 %	37.5 %	15 %
Finland	77.3 %	93.1 %	62.1 %	58.2 %	20 %	9.7 %
Italy	74.8 %	94.3 %	56 %	12.1 %	8 %	5.1 %
Romania	86.8 %	93.4 %	50.5 %	40.9 %	14.3 %	22.1 %
Spain	75.7 %	89 %	53.3 %	14.1 %	20 %	10.2 %

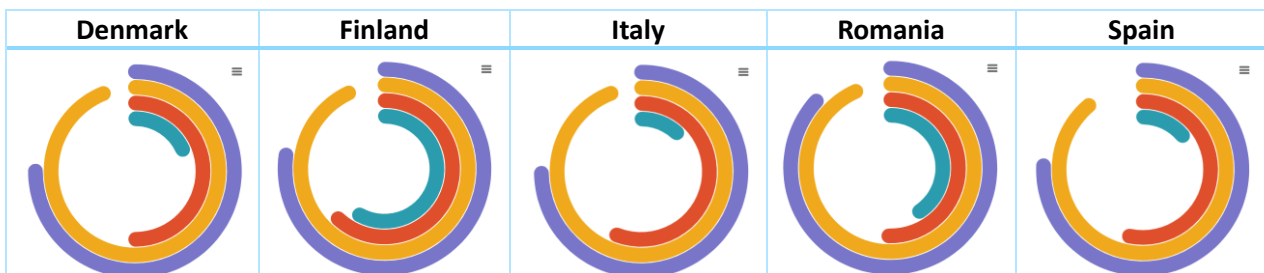


Figure 9 The attractiveness of the teaching profession, Eurydice Teachers' dashboard. Source: Eurydice (various years), Erasmus+ (2023) and OECD (TALIS 2018, Education at a Glance 2023).

- ● Collegial leadership - Share of teachers agreeing that school provides staff with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions (2018)
- ● Autonomy - Share of teachers who report that they have control over various aspects of their classroom teaching (2018)
- ● Actual teaching time - Average number of hours teaching as a share of total working time during the most recent complete calendar week (2018)
- ● Societal appreciation - Teachers' views of the way society values their profession (2018)
- On-the-job training – Minimum length of professional training (including in-school placement) as a share of minimum duration of ITE for lower secondary education (2019-20).
- Mentoring – Share of novice teachers who have an assigned a mentor at the current school (2018)

Denmark



[The attractiveness of the teaching profession](#)

[Eurydice overview](#)

[Legislation and official policy documents](#)

Priorities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – playful learning – technological empowerment – sustainable learning – use of artificial intelligence – use of data and learning analytics – digital skills as DigCompEdu – computational thinking – supporting the development of creativity – foreign languages learning – pedagogical approaches – creating content for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – insufficient duration and depth – time constraints – funding issues – technology integration

Table 2

Regulations

Main [Regulatory framework for the teacher education in Denmark](#) supported with the [example of Teacher educations study plan from Aarhus](#) and information about [current reform of teacher education](#).

In Denmark teachers can enrol in large amount of continuous professional development. [In a mapping of continuing education opportunities for teachers from April 2024](#), 134 different programs have been identified as relevant for teachers, where individuals with a teaching degree meet the admission requirements. Teacher also has the opportunity to participate in courses at CFU – Centre for Teaching Materials, as an example, see the [CFU courses at VIA](#).

Finland



[The attractiveness of the teaching profession](#)

[Eurydice overview](#)

[Legislation and official policy documents](#)

Priorities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – technological empowerment – sustainable learning – digital skills as DigCompEdu – supporting the development of creativity – pedagogical approaches – wellbeing skills and students (children) – overall wellbeing, health, and resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – budget cuts and financial constraints – evolving educational demands – increasing workload and stress – shortage of qualified teachers

Table 3

Regulations

Legislation and Acts defining teacher education and teacher qualifications: Teacher Education Act ([844/1971](#)), Early Childhood Education Act ([540/2018](#)), Basic Education Act ([628/1998](#)), Decree on the Qualifications of Educational Staff ([986/1998](#)). Additional information: [Teacher Education Development Programme 2022–2026](#), Combining Research and Practice: [An Inside Look at Finland’s Teacher Training Schools](#), [Core Teacher Education and Induction](#).

[Continuous professional development](#) programme emphasizes career-long professional and continuous learning. This includes regular in-service training and opportunities for teachers to update their skills and knowledge throughout their careers. [Teacher professional development](#) and [Teacher training](#) - Education Finland pages details the professional development opportunities for teachers in Finland, highlighting Finnish expertise.

Italy



[The attractiveness of the teaching profession](#)

[Eurydice overview](#)

[Legislation and official policy documents](#)

Priorities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – technological empowerment – digital skills as DigCompEdu – foreign languages learning – pedagogical approaches – inclusion and disabilities, inclusive pedagogies – diversity management – civic education and active citizenship – STEM education – teaching and organizational autonomy – competency-based teaching and methodological innovation – connection between school and the workforce – continuous assessment and improvement – analytical and problem-solving skills – interdisciplinary understanding – ethical and civic values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – misalignment of theory and practice – overemphasis on theory – disparities among universities – lack of focus on inclusive education – digital competence – speed of change – lack of resources – precarious career path of teachers – the integration of digital tools – inclusion and diversity

Table 4

Regulations

The latest regulations affecting teacher education include [Law 79/2022](#), which reformed the training and recruitment process for secondary school teachers, and [Decree 249/2010](#), which lays out the general framework for primary and secondary teacher training. The Italian Ministry of Education (MIUR) oversees these programs and provides guidelines on mandatory components and credit requirements. Additional information [Centre for Teaching and Learning of the University of Bologna](#).

In 2010, [Law 170/2010](#) focused on students with specific learning disorders (DSA). It introduced tools and teaching methods designed to help each student reach their full potential, emphasising personalised and individualised educational strategies. [Decreto Inclusion](#) (Inclusion Decree), first passed in 2017 and updated in 2019, represents

the latest step in this educational evolution. More information available at [Asnor – Associazione Nazionale Orientatori](#).

In Italy, continuous professional development for teachers is regulated through several frameworks and policies. [National Teacher Training Framework](#): Italian law emphasizes continuous training as an essential part of teaching, which aligns with the broader objectives of lifelong learning. [Piano Nazionale di Formazione](#) (PNF), [Law July 13, 2015, No. 107](#), "Buona Scuola". More information are available on [SOFIA](#) The Ministry of Education's official portal for the management and delivery of professional development courses for teachers on emerging competencies, including digital, sustainability, and advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence.

Romania



[The attractiveness of the teaching profession](#)

[Eurydice overview](#)

[Legislation and official policy documents](#)

Priorities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – playful learning – technological empowerment – sustainable learning – entrepreneurship – improving PISA results – digital skills as DigCompEdu – pedagogical approaches – creating content for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – need for balance – update the curriculum and resize the pedagogical, teaching practice – use of technology, digital components – novelties of Law and their implementation – bring up to date some of the programs – organization of continuous training courses – costs involved in teachers' participation

Table 5

Regulations

[Pre-University Education Law no. 198/2023](#) and [Higher Education Law no. 199/2023](#). Ministry of Education Order [No. 4139/2022](#) of June 29, 2022, regarding the approval of the Methodology for organizing the psycho-pedagogical training program for the certification of the competences for the teaching profession by the specialized departments within the accredited higher education institutions. Ministry of Education Order [no. 4524/2020](#) for establishing and organizing the university didactic master's programs.

Ministry of Education Order no. 4224/06.07.2022 for the approval [of the Framework Methodology](#) regarding the quality assurance of programs for the continuous professional development of teachers in pre-university education and the accumulation of transferable professional credits.

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The Strategic Project Professionalization of Teaching Career - PROF (Project ID: POCU / 904/6/25/146587), <https://www.eprof.ro/>

Spain



[The attractiveness of the teaching profession](#)

[Eurydice overview](#)

[Legislation and official policy documents](#)

Priorities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – playful learning – technological empowerment – sustainable learning – entrepreneurship – use of artificial intelligence – improving PISA results – use of data and learning analytics – digital skills as DigCompEdu – computational thinking – supporting the development of creativity – foreign languages learning – pedagogical approaches – creating content for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – reform of access to university education – strengthen the internship – use the future Framework of Professional Teaching Competences as a reference – ensure the provision of key aspects in CPD

Table 6

Regulations

Teacher’s initial education is defined *as a basis* in the following regulations to date. The information applies to all educational jurisdictions: For 2nd cycle of ECEC: [article 92 of the Organic Law, 3/2020, amending the Organic Law, 2/2006, of education](#) and [BOE 312 de 29/12/2007 Sec 1 Pag 53735 a 53738](#). For Primary Education: [article 93 of the Organic Law, 3/2020, amending the Organic Law, 2/2006, of education](#) and [BOE-A-2007-22449 Orden ECI/3857/2007, de 27 de diciembre, por la que se establecen los requisitos para la verificación de los títulos universitarios oficiales que habiliten para el ejercicio de la profesión de Maestro en Educación Primaria](#). For upper stages (compulsory secondary education, upper secondary & VE): [articles 94 to 98 of the Organic Law, 3/2020, amending the Organic Law, 2/2006, of education](#) and [Order EDU/3498/2011](#) amending [Order ECI/3858/2007](#).

The [LOE](#) and [LOMLOE](#) set a series of guidelines that must be respected by the Continuing professional development programmes offered by the education authorities responsible for planning and organising them in their jurisdiction. The information is presented for each of the educational jurisdictions. [Scope of the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports](#). For example Andalucía - [Resolución de 30 de septiembre de 2024, de la Dirección General de Innovación y Formación del Profesorado, por la que se aprueba el desarrollo de las líneas estratégicas de formación del profesorado establecidas en el III Plan Andaluz de Formación Permanente del Profesorado y las pautas de elaboración y desarrollo de los Proyectos de Formación para el curso 2024/2025. \(juntadeandalucia.es\)](#) and Illes Balears - [Decreto 41/2016, de 15 de julio, por el que se regula la formación permanente del profesorado de la enseñanza no universitaria de la Comunidad Autónoma de las Illes Balears.](#)

CONCLUSION

The 21st Century European Teachers project has provided a comprehensive and nuanced overview of the current landscape of teacher education and training across Europe. Through extensive research and collaboration among partners from Denmark, Finland, Italy, Romania, and Spain, this report has mapped the regulatory frameworks, identified key priorities, and highlighted pressing challenges in both initial teacher education (ITE) and continuous professional development (CPD).

A central finding of this report is the shared commitment across countries to modernise and enhance teacher education. Pedagogical innovation, digital competence aligned with the DigCompEdu framework, and sustainable learning have emerged as common priorities, reflecting the evolving demands of 21st-century classrooms. Countries are increasingly recognising the importance of equipping teachers not only with subject knowledge but also with the skills to foster creativity, inclusivity, and technological empowerment.

At the same time, the report underscores persistent challenges that hinder progress. These include the theory-practice gap, inconsistent training quality, limited funding, and the need for more inclusive and diverse education strategies. The attractiveness and accessibility of the teaching profession remain critical concerns, with several countries reporting difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified educators.

The country-specific analyses further illustrate the diversity of approaches and contexts within Europe. While each country faces unique circumstances, the shared goals and challenges point to the value of continued cross-national collaboration. The project's participatory methodology has enabled stakeholders to reflect on their practices and learn from one another, fostering a collective vision for the future of teacher education.

Looking ahead, the findings of this report can inform policy development, institutional reform, and strategic investment in teacher education. By addressing the identified challenges and building on the shared priorities, European education systems can better prepare teachers to meet the needs of learners in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Ultimately, the success of educational transformation hinges on the empowerment of teachers. Supporting their professional growth, valuing their contributions, and ensuring equitable access to high-quality training are essential steps toward achieving the goals of the European Education Area and fostering resilient, inclusive, and future-ready schools.

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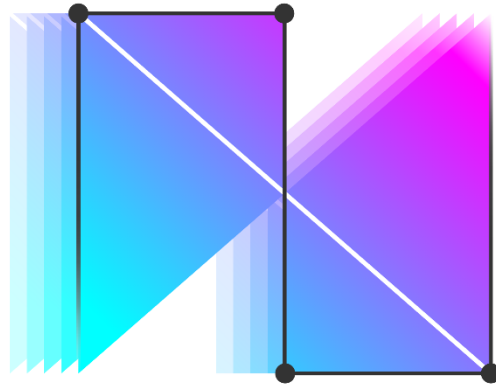
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21st century European Teachers



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