

# NEWSLETTER

## Introduction

According to the OECD report Education at a Glance 2020, in 2018, young teachers (below the age of 30) only accounted for a small proportion of the teaching population: 10% in lower secondary and 8% in upper secondary, on average across OECD countries. The pattern is particularly striking at the upper secondary level in project countries - in Lithuania 3.03%, Czech Republic 4.06%, in Latvia 7.8% and in lower secondary level only 3.66% in Lithuania, 7.71% in Latvia, 9.42% in Czech Republic are young teachers (below the age of 30) which is below OECD averages.

The ageing of the teaching force has a number of implications for countries' education systems. Competitive salaries, good working conditions and career development opportunities may have attracted young people to teaching in some countries or helped to retain effective teachers in others.

Young professionals are entering general education institutions, but their number is insufficient. This is confirmed by the data on the total length of service

of teachers in the school. The results of the TALIS study show that about 13% of teachers have less than 5 years of experience, but twice as many teachers with 6 to 10 years of service. This means that a relatively large number of young professionals start working at schools, but in the long run, they do not continue to work as teachers. The problem has to be solved urgently and comprehensively, so that countries do not find themselves in a situation where there will not be enough teachers in educational institutions.

TALIS study in 2018 indicated that the reason for


the drop-out of novice teachers is very likely due to insufficient support from the school administration and the municipality.

In the first phase of the project, national reports on the working and professional conditions and status of novice teachers were drafted, and questionnaire surveys were conducted among novice teachers and among founders, school directors, and those responsible for implementing educational policies.

Here follow the main outcomes of the available questionnaires and country reports.



**Competitive salaries, good working conditions and career development opportunities may have attracted young people to teaching in some countries or helped to retain effective teachers in others.**



**The urgent need for building support systems for novice teachers is confirmed as only 29.2% of novice teachers are satisfied with professional support in an educational institution.**

## Latvia

In Latvia in 2018, trade union organization LIZDA made research "Evaluation of the Teacher Professional Support System", and 69.3 % of the respondents agreed with the statement: "There is no unified and structured support system for novice teachers in Latvia". The urgent need for building support systems for novice teachers is confirmed as only 29.2% of novice teachers are satisfied with professional support in an educational institution, 44.3% of the surveyed teachers agree that a novice teacher is offered mentor support at the educational institution to provide assistance in starting the pedagogical work, but only in 10% of the cases, the mentor is financially reimbursed, and in 4.7%, the daily workload is reduced in order to fulfil the novice teacher mentor responsibilities.

This need for the support system is emphasized in the Latvian education policy planning document "Education development guidelines 2021-2027" where attracting of new teachers, thus ensuring constant generation of teachers, is one of the three most important priorities in general education. This priority will be reached by 2 main actions: 1) strengthening the novice teachers' training and support system, provision of mentors (advisors) for

a purposeful support of novice teachers; 2) improvement of the teacher remuneration model - revision of the principles of remuneration.

In Latvia, the average age of a teacher is 48 years. According to national legislation, in the 2019/2020 school year, in Latvia the lowest salary rate for teachers was 750EUR (gross wage), but the school director had the right to set a teacher's monthly salary rate up to 50% higher than the lowest teacher's monthly salary rate, so the highest possible teacher's salary rate was 1,125EUR. According to the data of the Ministry of education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, the average wage rate in municipal schools was 831.59EUR for a workload of 30 hours a week in the 2019/2020 school year.

The following examples of good practice in educational institutions are to be positively assessed: 1) 45.4% of new teachers have access to teaching materials financed by the educational institution; 2) 9.4% of new teachers are provided with additional paid working time for the preparation of the necessary materials for lessons; 3) 10.2% of new teachers have the opportunity to receive compensation for transport expenses; 4) 12.6% of new teachers have the opportunity to receive a service apartment; 5) 12.2% of new teachers are paid for bachelor's or master's studies in higher education institutions and pedagogy programmes.

## About the project

The four trade unions of LIZDA (Latvia), LESTU (Lithuania), ZNP (Poland), and ČMOS PŠ (the Czech Republic) have decided to jointly review and map the position of, and the support system for, novice teachers in their respective countries. **The project no. 2021-1-LV01-KA220-SCH-000024284, which they started together within the Erasmus+ programme in 2021, is called The Development of Support System for Novice Teachers.**

Educational systems in all the countries listed above face the issues of a low number of "young" teachers and a low prestige of the teaching profession.



# Lithuania

There is a trend of decline in the number of teachers wishing to study and complete teacher qualifications. In 2020, there were 40,257 teachers employed by Lithuanian schools, averaging 51 years of age. The government strategic document regarding education stated that the priority is “to make the teaching profession attractive, create clear career opportunities, promote attractive working conditions, improve conditions for pre-retirement age teachers, create most favourable conditions for representatives of other professions to retrain and work as teachers, finance opportunities for already working teachers to acquire additional teacher qualifications using state funds, reimbursements of expenses directly related to professional development and professional activities.”

So far, the Lithuanian educational system has introduced several solutions (e.g., targeted scholarships, a plan for teacher training and in-service training), several projects (namely, I choose to teach, I will be a teacher in Vilnius, Continue!), and allocated the budget of EUR 3,000,000 to fund the payments of severance packages to retired teachers who leave the profession voluntarily to make room for younger people. There are also funds set aside to increase the salaries of all teachers. Salary dynamics between 2019 and 2022 resulted in an average 22% increase in teachers' salaries across the profession. The salary ranges from EUR 1,346 to 1,891 based on the length of practice.

The LESTU union supports the plans to improve existing teacher databases to enable forecasting the need for teachers in specific municipalities and schools alongside increasing the number of applicants and graduates of pedagogical specialisations. The resulting product should help in reforming the teacher education system to make it easier for novice teachers to start their careers at school and establishing a system in schools to help novice teachers adapt to their workplace. The questionnaire survey showed that although novice teachers enter the profession motivated and with a positive attitude, they feel insufficiently prepared for the actual performance of the profession. They would need more methodical guidance and skills to teach students with special needs.

The Lithuanian system's strength is the fact that policy makers are aware of the need for national, coherent and sustainable measures to attract teachers; its weakness is the fact that all existing measures to attract teachers are fragmented and unsustainable, and the existing databases do not

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allow for forecasting the need for teachers in specific municipalities or schools. The current system of pay does not motivate people to enter the teaching profession.

## The Czech Republic

In the Czech educational system, about 3.7 percent of all teachers are novices. The average age of teachers is 47.2 years. It was estimated that up to 60 percent of students of pedagogical faculties are not looking for a job in regional education. According to research, the most common phase of the teaching career when notices to leave the teaching profession are submitted is the period at the start of the profession (from two or three to five years). The salary level for the teacher's work is not sufficient in comparison with other university-degree professions. The progress on the salary scale is based on the principle of seniority in the professions. This is another factor contributing to the low attractiveness of the teaching profession. The salary at 130 percent of the average gross pay in the national economy is to be guaranteed through a new provision of the Education Act. However, the amendment does not provide legal individual entitlement of the employee. It is just an expression of the entitlement to a certain financial amount which is to be allocated from the state budget. Alongside salary, school support is important for novice teachers. In particular, induction and mentoring programmes may play an important role. This was also agreed upon by most of the questionnaire survey answers. In the Programme Statement, the new government committed itself to implementing the Czech Republic's Educational Policy Strategy until 2030+, and improving professional support for teachers. Undergraduate teacher training is also to be amended, with an emphasis on targeted support for study programmes aimed at preparing their participants for the regulated teaching profession performance, with the higher share of individual work with students, and the larger scope of reflected internships. A comprehensive induction system should be the basis for supporting both novice and mentor teachers. The strength of the Czech educational system is the fact that the current legislation allows

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for further education of teachers during their employment with the support of the employer. On the other hand, there is no specific legislation or systemic support for novice teachers.

## Poland

Information on the state of the educational system and conditions for novice teachers in Poland was not available at the time of this newsletter's publishing date.

## Project partner meeting in Vilnius

On 2 and 3 June 2022, a meeting of representatives of partner organizations took place in Vilnius, Lithuania. At this meeting, representatives of the project partner organisations presented the results of national questionnaire surveys and conclusions of reports.

### More information:

1. Latvian Educational and Scientific Workers' Trade Union, LIZDA: About us - LIZDA
2. Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Union, LESTU: LŠMPS – LIETUVOS ŠVIETIMO IR MOKSLO PROFESINĖ SAJUNGA (svietimoprofsajunga.lt)
3. Czech and Moravian Trade Union of Workers in Education, ČMOS PŠ: Home page | ČMOS PŠ (skolskeodbory.cz)
4. Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego, ZNP: ZNP - Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego: ZNP



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