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Levels of Autonomy and Responsibilities of Teachers in Europe

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Eurydice
The information network on education in Europe

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Eurydice
European Unit
Avenue Louise 240
B-1050 Brussels
Tel. +32 2 600 53 53
Fax +32 2 600 53 63
E-mail: info@eurydice.org
Internet: http://www.eurydice.org

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PREFACE

Over the past 20 years, educational policies across Europe have focused on improving the quality of education, in particular through increasing the capacity for innovative teaching and reinforcing the professionalization of teachers. This places new demands on teachers increasing their responsibilities, widening their duties and, more generally, changing their working conditions and status. Besides an enhanced knowledge of the fundamentals of teaching emanating from, amongst other things, continuing professional development and the adoption of innovative teaching practices, teachers must have the ability to reflect on and adapt to local learning environments both individually and collectively as part of the school's teaching team.

The Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament of August 2007 on improving the quality of teacher education identified the quality of teaching as a key factor in raising educational attainment levels and achieving the Lisbon goals. It recognised that 'as schools become more autonomous and open learning environments, teachers assume ever greater responsibility for the content, organisation and monitoring of the learning process, as well as for their own personal career-long professional development'.

In many countries, these new expectations have been accompanied by an increase in autonomy which allows teachers the flexibility to carry out their duties. Such autonomy often goes hand in hand with increased accountability – an accountability which is no longer based solely on teachers' abilities to adhere to the institution's operational procedures but also on the evaluation of their results.

One of the central priorities of the Slovenian presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first half of 2008 was to examine such issues more closely, as a prerequisite for the development of a creative and innovative atmosphere in schools. The Slovenian presidency therefore asked for a Eurydice study that analyses how far recent changes in the teaching profession have extended the autonomy and educational responsibilities of teachers. The report also represents a logical sequel to the discussion of school autonomy in the document *School Autonomy in Europe, Policies and Measures* completed by the Eurydice Network for the Portuguese EU presidency in the second half of 2007.

This publication therefore presents a comparative picture of the tasks teachers assume in the different countries and the autonomy they have to carry them out. I believe this new Eurydice study represents an important contribution to better understanding the changes in the role of teachers as key players in education.

Ján Figel'

Commissioner for Education, Training,
Culture and Youth

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to provide a comparative analysis of whether or not changes in the teaching profession have extended the autonomy and educational responsibilities of teachers.

The report consists of six chapters, an annexe and concludes with a synthesis.

Chapter 1 deals with the historical and institutional background of the education policies that have effectively placed new responsibilities on teachers. The relationship between measures for school autonomy and the changing role of teachers is examined, as is the relationship between their broader range of responsibilities and efforts to improve the performance of education systems. The chapter then considers how the fresh demands facing schools in terms of social commitments (including the integration of pupils with special educational needs and provision for an increasingly mixed school population, etc.) may be a further reason why teachers are now entrusted with additional responsibilities.

Chapter 2 focuses on how the content of school curricula and teaching objectives are drawn up and the part teachers are expected to play in adapting them. It goes on to discuss how far teachers are free, first, to determine the curricular content of compulsory and optional subjects; secondly, to decide which textbooks should be used to teach them; and thirdly, to adopt their own teaching methods and organise pupils into groups for learning activities. The chapter also discusses the choice of criteria for the internal assessment of pupils. Finally, it considers who takes responsibility for deciding whether pupils should repeat a year, and the part played by teachers in devising the content of examinations for certified qualifications.

Chapter 3 reports on definitions of working time in employment contracts. It also examines tasks that might be contractually required of teachers besides teaching, the preparation of lessons and the marking of work by pupils. In addition, it considers how far teachers are expected to take part in teamwork and whether legislation or guidelines exist specifically to promote teamwork related to particular activities.

Chapter 4 covers the requirements and opportunities associated with continuing professional development (CPD). It examines the extent to which CPD is a professional obligation or an optional undertaking for teachers, and whether requirements in this area are regulated in terms of the time (in hours) spent annually on CPD. Special consideration is given to whether the choice of CPD depends on a training plan to meet the priorities of national or local authorities, or whether the choice is left to schools. Also briefly discussed are whether CPD is organised during working time and, if so, whether teachers require special permission to attend training and how their absence is managed. Finally, the chapter considers the level of authority responsible for administering funding for CPD and the incentives that may be offered teachers to take part in it.

Chapter 5 deals with the contribution of teachers to the process of reform and educational innovation and examines whether teachers participate individually or collectively in reforms such as those concerned with their terms and working conditions, school curricula and teaching objectives in general.

Chapter 6 covers the various measures concerned with accountability and evaluation, including results-based evaluation, and considers their individual and collective aspects. It also focuses on whether new duties have given rise to individual or collective incentives to motivate teachers in carrying them out.

The study covers school education at ISCED levels 1 and 2. While it relates to public sector schools in all countries, the state-subsidised private sector is also taken into account in the case of Belgium, Ireland and the Netherlands. The reference year for data is 2006/07, but forthcoming reforms are also considered. All Eurydice network countries with the exception of Turkey are covered.

With respect to the methodology of this study, the Eurydice European Unit developed a guide to content in conjunction with the Slovenian Ministry of Education and Sport. The comparative analysis is based on responses to this guide from Eurydice National Units. To ensure that the information contained in the study is an accurate representation of national situations, a checking phase was held in April 2008. All of the contributors to this study are acknowledged at the end of the volume.

CHAPTER 1: THE POLITICAL CONTEXT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The last two decades have been noteworthy for marked changes in the responsibilities assigned to teachers in the great majority of European countries. The teaching profession has changed conspicuously over the past 20 years. Aspects of this trend include greater autonomy in educational matters, enabling teachers to become more effectively involved in curriculum development; the acceptance of new day-to-day responsibilities (such as replacing absent colleagues, supervising new teachers, etc.); and the greater demands placed on teachers (in areas such as teamwork, time spent at school, or their involvement in drafting the school development plan or school curriculum, etc.).

The original causes of these major changes, which in all countries have resulted in a greater workload for teachers, are many and often interrelated. There is an apparent link, first, between the way in which the responsibilities of teachers have evolved and school autonomy in the broad sense, including financial and administrative autonomy, etc. (section 1). However, as will be explained further, this does not apply to all countries. In particular, in some countries with a long tradition of curricular autonomy, such as Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, or some which embarked on pioneering and ambitious policies in this area ([1]) in the 1980s, the relationship between the two trends is less clear.

The more substantial responsibilities assigned to teachers may also be associated with efforts to improve the performance of education systems, often against the background of a 'schools crisis' triggered partly by the publication of results judged to be disappointing in standard national and international assessments (section 2).

Finally, the fresh demands placed on schools in terms of satisfying social needs (including the integration of pupils with special educational needs and providing for an increasingly mixed school population, etc.) are a further reason why teachers are now entrusted with new responsibilities of a social nature (section 3).

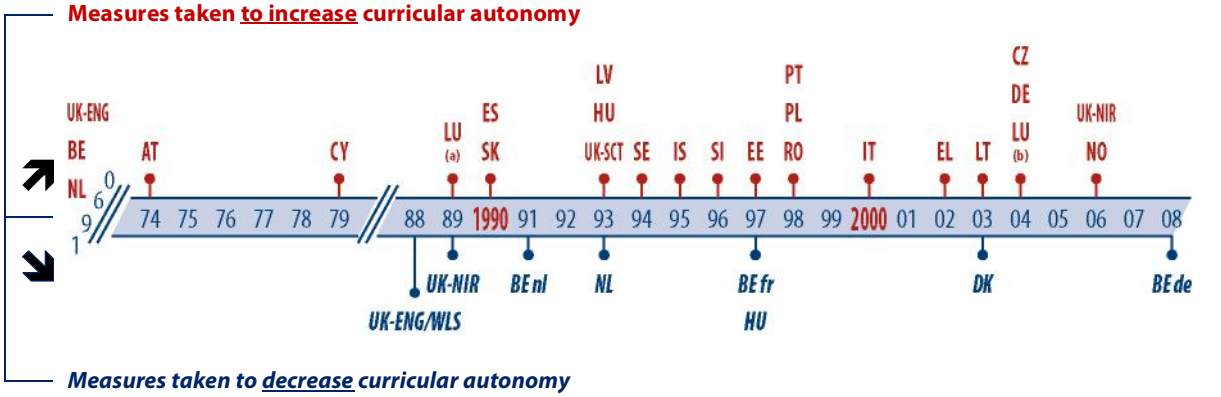
1.1. Teaching responsibilities, school autonomy and decentralisation

In the great majority of European countries, new responsibilities were originally assigned to teachers as a result of growing school autonomy and, more broadly speaking, to decentralisation. While in most school systems – even the most centralised – teachers had already long been free to choose their teaching methods and materials (school textbooks, etc.), the reforms concerned with school autonomy, often coupled with decentralisation measures, now enabled them to become actively involved in devising school education plans. It is expected that this new-found autonomy and the freedom which in principle goes with it will lead teachers to develop their creativity and ability to innovate, while becoming more actively engaged and thus more motivated, and encourage more differentiated provision better suited to the heterogeneity of the school population that has occurred with 'mass secondary education' and comprehensive education.

Except in certain pioneering countries such as Finland, which from the 1980s embarked on an education policy anchored in a 'culture of trust', the majority of these policies for curricular autonomy gathered momentum in the 1990s. This occurred, for example, in Estonia with the *National Curriculum for Basic School*, as well as in Spain with the 1990 LOGSE strengthened by the 2006 Education Act, in Iceland with the 1995 Compulsory School Act, in Lithuania with the 1992 'General Concept of Education' Act, or yet again in Slovenia with the major reform of 1996.

([1]) See the report Eurydice (2007) School Autonomy in Europe. Policies and measures.

Figure 1.1: Dates of major reforms that have increased or decreased the autonomy of teachers (ISCED 1 and 2) between 1950 and 2008



(:) BG and IE

Source: Eurydice.

Additional notes

Belgium: The administrative authority for schools run directly by the three Communities (the education minister in each case) is positioned at central (top) level, whereas the education providers of grant-aided public-sector schools (in particular the communes), as well as grant-aided private ones, are fairly close to their schools. As a result, these subsidised institutions experience school autonomy more directly. In the Flemish Community, public-sector schools directly dependent on the ministry were granted a level of autonomy similar to subsidised schools in 1989.
Belgium and **Netherlands**: Due to a long-standing history of school autonomy, no precise date is given here for these two countries.
Denmark and **Finland**: Autonomy has been progressively implemented, with no precise dates specified.
Luxembourg: (a) ISCED 1; (b) ISCED 2.
Hungary: It is difficult to specify a particular year in which autonomy was restricted because the process was the outcome of many different regulations. In reality, therefore, 1997 corresponds to the year in which in-service teacher training was made compulsory.
United Kingdom (ENG/WLS): Legislation in 1988 provided for the introduction, for the first time, of compulsory minimum curricula with prescribed programmes of study. Since then, successive revisions have reduced the level of prescription.
United Kingdom (NIR): Legislation in 1989 provided for the introduction, for the first time, of a compulsory minimum curriculum with prescribed programmes of study. Major reforms are currently being implemented under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

Explanatory note

Only major (legislative or official) regulations providing for the implementation of policies for curricular autonomy covering different areas (timetables, curricula, certificates, etc.) have been taken into account here. One-off or isolated measures for autonomy, which have often preceded major reforms, are not included in this historical backdrop. Neither are subsequent further reforms or amendments.

In other countries, the trend towards greater curricular autonomy has been more recent. This applies to Italy in which, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle, the central government has since 2000 enacted national recommendations instead of detailed curricula as in the past. Similarly, in 2004, the Czech Republic drew up a two-tier curriculum providing for the development of 'school education programmes' to be implemented in 2007/08. Luxembourg has likewise followed suit. France is now considering the prospect of greater teaching autonomy and recently convened the Pochard Commission to institute broad discussion of the working conditions of teachers (with a view to redefining and broadening their responsibilities, establishing the number of hours they should work annually and diversifying their duties). Overall, in virtually

all countries that have long been centralised from an educational standpoint, new more flexible guides to teaching content have been introduced. They have enabled teachers to contribute locally to the development of educational content.

That said, in 2007, the trend towards greater curricular autonomy has not been universally followed in all European countries. On the contrary, some of them have moved in the opposite direction. Restrictions in autonomy and broadening of the responsibilities assumed by teachers are occurring both in countries in which educational provision has long been decentralised, as in Belgium (grant-aided private schools), the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and in those, such as Hungary, which followed broader policies in this respect from the 1990s onwards. These exceptions highlight the fact that greater curricular autonomy does not fully account for the increased responsibilities of teachers in all contexts.

Thus in the three Communities of Belgium, the responsibilities of teachers were broadened overall, while the room for manoeuvre of schools and their administrative authorities or bodies, as education providers, was at the same time steadily limited by the development of standards specifying the aims of this provision. These new pointers to more structured provision have become 'final objectives' *(eindtermen)* in the Flemish Community of Belgium since 1991, 'competence thresholds' *(socles de compétences)* in the French Community since 1999 (following the 1997 'Missions' decree), and framework programmes *(Rahmenpläne)* in the German-speaking Community of Belgium since 2008. While the 'organising bodies' are still entitled to devise local curricula, their educational content now has to satisfy the legislative requirements of their Communities.

In the United Kingdom (England and Wales), centralising measures were introduced by the Education Reform Act 1988, which established compulsory minimum curricula for the first time. More detailed curriculum frameworks and resources were subsequently introduced in England, such as the literacy and numeracy strategies. Whilst teachers valued the additional support provided through these initiatives, they often found that the pace and manner of change added to the pressures they were experiencing. Since 2003, measures to tackle workload pressures have been introduced in England and Wales. Additionally, since 1995, reviews of the curriculum have increased the level of flexibility available to schools and teachers. The new *National Curriculum* for 11-16-year-olds, which is due to come into effect in September 2008, should allow for greater flexibility when devising curricula at local level. In the Netherlands, the teaching programmes of school competent authorities or bodies and of schools themselves have also been guided since 1993 by the introduction of standards that were reformed in 2006.

Curricular autonomy is also called into question in countries that have more often than not developed strong policies towards it since the 1990s. The substantial freedom that teachers still undoubtedly exercise in these countries now goes hand in hand with new frameworks to guide their action. For example, measures limiting the curricular autonomy of teachers in Hungary, including the obligation to undertake in-service training, were initiated at the end of the 1990s and introduced over several years. The 2003 *National Core Curriculum* has become more detailed even though it still leaves teaching staff substantial scope for flexibility. Similarly, 'educational programmes and packages' have been tested in 120 schools at ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 since 2005. These new educational resources are intended to provide teachers with practical guides, mainly in the form of teaching materials, to help them plan their work, prepare their lessons and assess pupils. Likewise in Denmark, in which freedom of education remains the basic rule, a 2003 amendment to the Act on *Folkeskole* states that the Ministry of Education is now responsible for defining national 'common objectives' for observance in principle. Furthermore, in the case of compulsory subjects, the Ministry now produces more detailed curriculum guidelines. While admittedly these documents have only advisory status, they appear to be very widely followed by municipalities and teachers alike.

Sweden – which back in 1993 introduced a goal-based curriculum in place of its former content-based one – has called into question its extensive school autonomy. Policy-makers are now envisaging a reform that would represent a move towards more strictly specified curricular content. Their desire for action stems from the findings of many surveys by the inspectorate revealing that goal-based curricula become difficult for

teachers to interpret and lead to major inequalities in school academic requirements. The 'Inquiry on Objectives and Follow-Up in Compulsory School' reporting in 2007 highlighted the need to provide teachers with curricular content that was more precise and easier to interpret. It emphasised that the wide variety in local interpretations of the curriculum had created marked differences between schools that were tending to compromise the existence of the 'comprehensive school' in any meaningful sense.

These contrasting developments in the freedom of teachers in education clearly characterise this area of school autonomy. While in the administrative and financial fields as well as human resources management, the last two decades have witnessed the virtually non-stop transfer of responsibilities from the central authorities to local players, in the area of teaching itself, reforms have tended to converge less, clearly demonstrating the lack of any consensus regarding the benefits of curricular autonomy. In some types of system, this approach to school organisation is viewed as a powerful factor in improving the quality of teaching and learning, whereas in very decentralised systems it is regarded as a potential risk liable to prevent the priority goals of educational effectiveness and equality from being achieved.

To sum up, the increase in responsibilities entrusted to teachers for some 20 years may, in the majority of European countries, be seen as one outcome of greater school autonomy, at least from a collective standpoint. The broader range of options in education should indeed not be confused with the acquisition of greater individual freedoms. On the contrary, in many countries it is clear that these newly acquired collective responsibilities actually reduce the capacity of individual teachers to take their own classroom decisions. Where the curriculum is worked out in detail at school level in terms of content, timetable and pupil assessment, teachers are obliged to cooperate in a way that inhibits their individual classroom independence.

However, a number of noteworthy exceptions demonstrate that other factors also lie behind current changes in the teaching profession, including the search for improvement in school performance.

1.2. Teacher responsibilities and the performance of education systems

Over and above the issue of school autonomy, the findings from national and international standardised assessments have also intensified discussion on the work done by teachers in many countries.

This applies in particular to those countries in which such findings have come as a wake-up call for the idealised vision of the national school system. This has led to immediate reconsideration of the role, enhanced professionalism and the new demands and responsibilities that teachers were expected to assume.

For example, in Germany, the results of the TIMSS and PISA surveys taken together – with the latter leading to what was described as the 'PISA shock' – led to broader thought and discussion concerning the search for better quality education. In 2000, this and other points of contention gave rise to a Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Teachers and, in 2004, to the establishment of national standards. In Denmark, a series of measures were taken in the light of PISA results judged to be inadequate. In particular, the programme for training teachers in lower secondary education now provides for a reduction in the number of subjects in which they can specialise in order to strengthen their proficiency in the fields concerned.

In France, the somewhat mediocre results for scientific literacy in PIRLS and PISA 2006 became a subject of intense concern at the very end of 2007. New school curricula for primary education were published in the spring of 2008 expressing the need for pupils to receive more intensive provision in the most basic subjects, and a new status for teachers is under consideration. Likewise in Hungary, the results from PISA 2000 led to discussion about teaching and learning practices and competence-based curricula. In the light of the findings from PISA 2006, Luxembourg has decided to extend what is judged to have been a worthwhile experiment granting schools for technical secondary education (ISCED 2) greater freedom to fix their own timetables and reorganising their teaching activity (with few or no teaching staff changes during the three-

year stage of schooling, smaller classes, and teacher support and training that match the needs of each school). In Sweden, the results from PISA and national assessments were considered to be disappointing, and gave rise among other things to improvements in initial teacher education, more thorough analysis of school subjects and a strengthening of in-service training.

In Norway, what was perceived as a poor performance in national and international standardised assessments resulted in a challenge to the 1997 curricular reform, a broadening of teacher responsibilities – in particular through the development of school autonomy – and increased requirements and opportunities in the field of continuing education.

In the German-speaking Community, these international assessments have had an even more direct influence on the work of teachers. In this Community in which all pupils aged 15 take part in the PISA surveys, the results obtained by each school form an integral component of its external evaluations. These new evaluation procedures are currently being launched on an experimental basis with a view to their becoming compulsory from 2009 onwards. As a result, they are almost bound to affect teachers when carrying out their daily individual activities.

In the United Kingdom (Scotland), the effort to improve school results in terms of effectiveness and equality also led to renewed debate on the pay and terms and conditions of employment of teachers. Broad discussion took place in the McCrone Committee culminating in the *Teacher's Agreement* of 2001. In the rest of the United Kingdom, teachers' pay and career structures have undergone a period of far-reaching reform, with the objective of being able to recruit, retain and motivate high quality teachers by rewarding good performance and improving career progression opportunities. In England and Wales, conditions of employment have also been reformed, following the signing, in 2003, of a national agreement on workforce reform, *Raising Standards and Tackling Workload*. The reforms implemented since 2003 include routine delegation of administrative and clerical tasks, the introduction of guaranteed professional time for planning, preparation and assessment, introduction of new limits on covering for absent colleagues, and the development of other new roles in schools for adults who support teachers' work and pupils' learning.

In addition to school autonomy and the search for better school results, changes in the teaching profession may also be attributed to an increase in the tasks schools have to perform.

1.3. Teaching responsibilities and a broader range of school social commitments

Economic, social and cultural changes also have some impact on the activities of teachers. Schools are required not just to improve the educational attainment of pupils but also to come up with their own proposed solutions to the management of more general social issues, including the integration of children with special educational needs, the social mix, equality of opportunity for disadvantaged pupils, and the integration of immigrant children. Where in the past these issues were resolved via a range of different paths through school, the adoption in many countries of the single structure model or the common core curriculum throughout the whole of compulsory education now oblige schools to develop social responsibilities with which they are not wholly familiar. Teachers have not always welcomed these changes, in which their own professional identity is compounded by duties characteristic of a specialist instructor or social assistant. In some countries, this trend is viewed not merely as an unwelcome departure from the distinctiveness of their profession (especially in secondary education) but also, from an objective standpoint, as an increase in the tasks they are expected to perform.

Thus in the Flemish Community of Belgium, teachers were assigned tasks that they considered to be well beyond the scope of their profession. Similarly, in Cyprus, they had to assume broader responsibilities as a result of the integration of children with special educational needs and from immigrant backgrounds, as well as new requirements in terms of pupils from a wide variety of social backgrounds in classes and schools alike. In France, a policy for positive discrimination introduced from the beginning of the 1980s, which involved

establishing *zones d'éducation prioritaire* (ZEPs, or priority education areas) supplemented by additional resources, made teachers more aware of the special needs of pupils experiencing difficulty and led to the beginning of teamwork and teaching innovations in the areas concerned. While requirements in Italy for the integration of pupils with special needs can be traced back to the 1970s, the arrival of large numbers of foreigners in the country since the 1990s has called for fresh skills and responsibilities on the part of teachers, enabling them to relate to a variety of cultures, communicate with pupils and their families, and teach pupils unfamiliar with Italian. In Lithuania, the new responsibilities with which teachers were entrusted in the social domain (social care and guardianship of pupils) were instrumental in triggering social protest among them. This movement led, among other things, to negotiation of a proposal for increased salaries in the years 2008 to 2011. During this period, teacher salaries in the country will be raised annually by 10-20 %. In Slovenia, the recent integration of children with special needs, as well as Romany children and those of immigrant origin has meant that teachers exercise broader social responsibilities. Yet a survey conducted by the Education Research Institute has revealed that teachers feel their skills are inadequate for work with mixed groups, in spite of support received from specialist teachers, smaller class sizes and in-service training that includes training in the provision of assistance to children experiencing difficulty.

Similarly in Sweden, a recent study by the Swedish National Agency for Education, entitled *Evaluation of Compulsory School 2003 (NU 2003)*, revealed that notwithstanding the development of continuing education, one-third of all teachers felt they lacked the skills needed to cater for children with special educational needs or to work with pupils from varied social and cultural backgrounds.

In very few countries have the new social responsibilities assumed by teams of teachers gone hand in hand with the creation of new posts in schools. However, in the Czech Republic in 2000, the new post of teacher assistant *(asistent pedagoga)* was established. This post was included in the Act on Educational Staff in 2004. Teachers' assistants help pupils who have special educational needs – including immigrants, Romany children, etc. – to adapt to the school environment. They also support members of the school teaching staff in their educational activities, and help them to communicate with pupils in cooperation with the latter's legal representatives and community. In Spain too, schools with large numbers of disadvantaged pupils have since 1996 been able to secure assistance from specialist teachers, known as 'Community Services Technical Teachers'. These specialists, who join the teaching teams at each school, act as intermediaries between the schools and families concerned and are involved in controlling and monitoring absenteeism, visiting parents, and other activities. Since 1977 in Italy, the integration of children with special educational needs has led to the recruitment of specialist teachers known as *insegnanti di sostegno*. They now number around 90,000, corresponding to one teacher for every two children. In the past few years in the United Kingdom (England) there has been a huge growth in the range and number of support staff in schools. This includes staff who are taking over tasks previously the responsibility of teachers with the aim of reducing workload, teaching assistants who, for example, provide support for special educational needs or other additional needs, and people such as learning mentors who help pupils overcome barriers to learning caused by social, emotional and behavioural problems.

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In conclusion, the major changes that have visibly expanded the activities of teachers are attributable to several different factors, including school autonomy, the search for enhanced quality in education and new social responsibilities assumed by schools. In some countries these factors have been complementary. For example, school autonomy and thus greater freedom in the realm of education have often been developed as a means of improving academic performance. In others, no more than a single factor has really contributed to changes in the teaching profession. In such cases, these reforms have been driven essentially by efforts to improve the performance of the education system.

Despite the many different causes, the institutional patterns adopted to broaden teaching responsibilities are fairly similar from one country to the next. With few exceptions, the decision to increase the range of responsibilities exercised by professionally qualified teachers has in most cases been taken at national (or top) level, even in countries with decentralised institutions. Indeed, both the regulatory frameworks governing the organisation of curriculum development and the legislation setting out the pay and terms and conditions of employment of teachers are determined at central level in the great majority of European countries. Where local authorities or other bodies that administer schools employ teachers directly, tripartite negotiations may be held involving the Ministry of Education, the teacher unions and local authority representatives. It is therefore through compliance with these national frameworks – which the unions perceive as safeguards – that local authorities or schools may reform the status of teachers and the precise scope of their activity.

The position of certain countries such as Sweden, Finland or Spain contrasts somewhat with these highly centralised processes for transferring responsibilities. Indeed, the regional and local authorities in those countries, which now play a major role in their education systems, are very much involved in determining the whole range of activities performed by teachers excluding of course any contribution they may make to the curriculum, for which the national (or top-level) authorities remain wholly or partially responsible in all European countries.

Aside from the foregoing exceptions, teaching activity is thus still regulated almost everywhere by national or central level authorities. However, in spite of this, such regulation is not necessarily incorporated within a well-ordered legal framework. Very few countries – the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom – have undertaken a full enquiry into the role of teachers leading to radical reform of their status and working conditions. In most cases, the current changes stem from the steady accumulation of a succession of laws each laying down fresh responsibilities without initiating any thorough discussion of what constitutes the essence of the teaching profession. Certain Nordic countries, such as Sweden, which have devolved broad responsibilities for teacher management to the municipalities, stand in contrast to this steady accumulation of regulations and are noteworthy for the autonomous status of their regional and local authorities.

However, the situation seems to be changing in some countries in which teacher management is being addressed in increasingly holistic terms.

One example is Spain which since 2006 has been taking action to reform the pay and terms and conditions of employment of teachers who work at non-university levels of education, and which has prepared a draft text that was still being discussed in October 2007. One may also cite France which in 2007/08 convened the so-called Pochard Commission to give further consideration to the working conditions of teachers. Similarly, a broadly-based research project in the Czech Republic between 2007 and 2011 is seeking to understand the development of the profession and focusing on issues that relate to the conditions of employment and status of teachers. Finally in Liechtenstein, the Ministry of Education and Science very recently decided to consider this issue, in response to a request by the teacher unions, and to carry out an investigation based on detailed surveys of the tasks and duties of teachers.

The relations that are bound to exist between status, responsibilities, remuneration, autonomy and accountability are central to this general discussion. In most cases, they are developed as part of broader reforms in the status of civil servants, or under pressure from the unions, which view them as a suitable platform for clarifying the responsibilities of teachers in a way consistent with their remuneration.