



Teacher Education and Training in the Western Balkans

Report on: ALBANIA



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The Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training was launched on 7 March 2012. It is the latest EU initiative for enhanced policy dialogue and regional cooperation in the Western Balkans. Its objectives are to help to prepare better our partners in this region for their eventual participation in the EU's policy cooperation framework, the Open Method of Coordination, to enhance their participation in EU programmes and to assist their reform efforts in the area of education and training. The Platform is also an opportunity for discussing issues of common interest among the participants, of sharing good practice and for identifying priorities and needs for further support.

One of the highest priorities identified by the Ministries of Education last year was the training of teachers, and EU support was requested on this topic. In response to this, the EU commissioned a study to map the situation of how teachers are educated and trained in that part of Europe, as comprehensive information on the subject is scarce. The objectives of this study were to look at the key policies, programmes, qualifications systems, quality assurance mechanisms, induction and mentoring programmes, continuing professional development and other aspects of teacher education and training in each country, but also to compare them across the region.

The results of this study are provided in individual country reports and a synthesis report comparing the strengths, weaknesses and good practices in the region. These reports will feed the policy dialogue of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training and will hopefully contribute to the on-going national reforms. The main results of the study will be presented, and experiences shared, in a regional seminar organised by the European Commission, under the Western Balkans Platform, in Ohrid in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 19-20 November 2013.

Teachers are among the most influential people in each individual's life. We can all remember those who inspired us, pushed us and guided us. The importance of a teacher's work cannot be overstated. It is directly linked to the quality of basic education provision, the development of key competences and it also impacts the quality of education at higher levels. That is why I am very pleased that the EU could contribute with this study to the policy dialogue on teacher education and training in the Western Balkans.



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Glossary*

Assessment	The sum of methods and processes used to evaluate the attainments (knowledge, know-how and/or competences) of an individual, and typically leading to certification.
Classroom Practice	The practical, school-based elements of any course of initial teacher education (ITE), lasting typically not more than a few weeks. It also includes teacher tasks undertaken outside the classroom, such as collaboration with colleagues or communication with parents. It is supervised by a school teacher, with periodic assessment by teachers at the training institution.
Competences	The set of learning outcomes: what a teacher knows, understands and is able to perform.
Continuing professional development	In-service ('on-the-job') activities that develop skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher provided in a formal or informal way, beyond the basic training initially required to carry out the job. In certain cases, they may lead to further qualifications. The term is used interchangeably with 'in-service training'.
Induction	A phase at the early stage of teacher's career during which novice teachers, having completed the formal programme of initial teacher education, receive structured guidance and support (e.g. from mentors). During induction, new entrants carry out some or all the tasks incumbent on experienced teachers, and they are remunerated for their work. It normally lasts at least several months.
ISCED levels	International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is an instrument for compiling statistics on education internationally. It distinguishes between six levels of education: pre-primary education (ISCED level 0), primary education (ISCED level 1), lower secondary education (ISCED level 2), upper secondary education (ISCED level 3), post-secondary non-tertiary level of education (ISCED level 4), tertiary-type A education (ISCED level 5A), tertiary-type B education (ISCED level 5B), advanced Research Qualifications (ISCED level 6).
Learning outcomes	A statement of what a learner knows understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. The learning outcome approach emphasises the results of learning rather than focusing on inputs such as length of study.
Initial teacher education	A pre-service training provided to student teachers before they have undertaken any teaching, eventually leading to a qualification to teach. It usually takes place in institutions of higher education.
Probation period	Temporary appointment in the form of a trial period, normally followed by permanent employment, of which conditions may vary. It can last between several months up to several years under varying conditions (depending on working regulations) and may be subject to a final assessment and is normally followed by permanent employment.
Professional training	Training that provides prospective teachers with both the theoretical and practical skills needed to be a teacher. In addition to courses in psychology and teaching methods and methodology, it includes in-class placements.
Professional standards	A statement of the professional knowledge, skills and competences required of the teacher at each career stage.
Qualification	A formal confirmation (e.g. certificate, diploma, degree) that an individual has achieved learning outcomes up to given standards; and/or the requirements for an individual to enter, or progress within an occupation.
Teacher	A person who is acknowledged as having the status of a teacher (or equivalent) according to the legislation and practice of a given country.
Teacher Education Institution	Any institution responsible for the overall delivery of a programme of ITE and the conferring of an ITE qualification.
Skill	Practiced/learnt efficiency in the performance of a specific (simple or complex) activity or a specific task.
Standard	A minimum level, depth and breadth of what is to be learnt. It provides the basis for final assessment, planning and implementation of teaching and training actions. Learning outcomes used in curricula can be considered as standards.

*Definitions applied by the European Commission, international organisations, or scholarly research.

List of abbreviations

CPD	Continuing professional development
EO	Educational Office
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HEIs	Higher education institutions
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDE	Institute of Development of Education
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession assistance
ITE	Initial teacher education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NAE	National Agency of Examinations
NIPE	National Inspectorate of Pre-university Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RED	Regional Education Department
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank

1 Primary and secondary education: an overview

This section provides a brief overview of the organisational and institutional aspects of the education system with a special focus on primary and secondary education. It defines the role of primary and secondary schooling, the role of primary and secondary school teachers, and lists the key school education indicators in this area. It is complemented by a graphic presentation of the current structure of the education system in Albania presented in Annex 1.

1.1 Current structure of the education system

The education system in Albania, as defined by the three education laws and the sublegal Act of the Ministry of Education and Science¹, consists of the following levels:

- Pre-school education (ages 3 - 6)
- Basic compulsory education
 - Primary level (ages 6-10, grades I-V)²
 - Lower secondary level (ages 11-15, grades VI-IX),
 - Special education
- Upper secondary level (ages 16-18/19, grades X-XII)
 - Gymnasium (X – XII)
 - Vocational education (2+1+1/ 2+2)
 - Oriented education (Sports, Foreign Languages, etc.)³
- Post-secondary education (1-2 years duration)
- Higher education⁴
 - Short cycle: Professional studies (professional diploma, 2 years of studies, 120 ECTS);
 - First cycle: Bachelor study programmes (Bachelor degree, 3 years of studies, 180 ECTS)
 - Second cycle: Master study programmes
 - a) Master of Science or Master of Fine Arts (2 years of studies, 120 ECTS)
 - b) Master of Professional Studies (1-1.5 years of studies, 60-90 ECTS)⁵
 - Third cycle: Doctorate study programmes (PhD, 3 or more years of studies).

¹1) Law No. 69, dated 21.06.2012 on Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania; 2) Law No. 8872, dated 29.03.2002, 'On Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Albania', Official Gazette: Year 2002, No. 11, Page 320; Publication Date: 18.04.2002, as amended by Law No. 10011 dated 30.10.2008; Annex 5 – Chapter 26; 3) Law No. 9741, dated 21.05.2007, 'On Higher Education in the Republic of Albania', (amended), Official Gazette: Year 2007, No. 68, Page 1917; Publication Date: 16.06.2007; Annex 3 – Chapter 26; 4) Normative Provisions on the 'Pre-university Education System', approved by the Minister of Education and Science in 2012; Annex 6 - Chapter 26.

²Article 22 of the Law 69/2012 stipulates that primary education comprises years 1-4. However, in current practice it comprises years 1-5, and the new scheme of 6 years (grades I-VI) will be implemented in academic year 2015-2016.

³Corresponding terms applied in the Law No. 69 dated 21.06.2012 on Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania are as follows: initial education consisting of elementary education and lower secondary education; and high secondary education comprising of gymnasias, secondary vocational education, and oriented education).

⁴Article 26 of the Law on Higher Education No 9741 dated 21.5.2007, amended by Law No 1 0 493 dated 15.12.2011.

⁵There are also second cycle integrated study programmes available in academic disciplines such as medicine, veterinary and architecture, which incorporate no less than 300 ECTS and last 5 years, as well as long term specialisation studies which are part of the third cycle.

For a graphic presentation of the education system please see Annex 1.

1.2 Organisation of primary and secondary education system

Nine years of education in Albania are compulsory and currently consist of two cycles: primary level (grades I-V) and lower secondary education (grades VI-IX). Education is completed when pupils sit for their final exam. Starting from academic year 2015/2016, a new scheme of 6 years of elementary education and 3 years of lower secondary education will be implemented in line with the Law No 69/2012 on the Pre-university Education System.

Upper secondary education in Albania is not compulsory. It is provided by secondary schools offering general education, secondary vocational schools, and schools of oriented education. It lasts three years (secondary school) or up to 5 years (vocational school). After its successful completion, pupils sit for the State Matura exam. Admission to the oriented education schools is in accordance with the criteria and procedures set out by instruction of the minister.⁶⁷

Pre-university education is offered by public and private educational institutions.

Table 1.1 Organisation of education system - at a glance summary table

Description	Age/Years
Age of pupils starting primary education	6
Number of years of primary education	9
Age of pupils starting lower secondary education	11/12*
Number of years of lower secondary education	4**
Number of years of upper secondary education	3
Number of years of obligatory education	9

*According to the ISCED levels.

**3 years from 2015/2016.

1.3 The role of primary and secondary education

The main goals of basic education as set by the Law on the Pre-University Education System are:

- the social, intellectual and physical development of every student;
- the command of the rules of conduct and cultivation of values, health care;
- sufficient preparation for continuing with secondary higher education or joining the labour market.⁸

Accordingly, in line with Article 23 of the above-mentioned law, upper secondary education aims at:

- further developing the competences obtained in initial education;
- the consolidation of the individuality of every student;
- the entirety of values and attitudes, the extension and deepening in certain fields of knowledge and preparation for tertiary education or the labour market.

As specified in Article 3 of the same legal document, the pre-university stage of education as a whole should prepare pupils:

- to respect and protect national identity, and develop cultural heritage;

⁶⁷The oriented education schools may start in certain forms of initial education ensuring the sufficient training of students in the subjects of general culture' (Article 22 of the Law on Pre-university Education System, 21.06.2012).

⁷The Law No 69 of 21.06.2012 on Pre-university Education..., op.cit.

⁸Article 22 of the Law on Pre-university Education..., op.cit.

- to develop in ethical, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects of life;
- to adjust to changes, have self-trust and spirit of cooperation, be able to provide assistance for welfare, progress, freedom and democracy;
- to be deeply convinced that justice, peace, harmony, cooperation and respect for others are high human values;
- to respect the traditions of other peoples;
- to be aware of environmental protection.

1.4 The role of primary and secondary school teachers

According to Article 56 of the Law on Pre-university Education System (2012), a teacher provides education to convey 'fundamental competences, based on learning standards, selecting among the best local and foreign contemporary methods and practices'. In doing so, a teacher is expected to:

- comply with the laws and regulations that are in force;
- ensure the progress of each pupil;
- develop and implement curricula;
- update professional competences;
- contribute to the progress of the institution.

The law further states that teaching at pre-university level should be conducted with the purpose of imparting the key competences for lifelong learning, such as communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; social and civic competences; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression.

1.5 Key trends in numbers in primary and secondary education

Based on data received from the Ministry of Education and Science (see Table 2.1), the following trends in school education can be observed:

- Albania spends less on education as a proportion of GDP than other countries in the region (3.42% of GDP in 2009), compared with 4.6 % on average in Eastern Europe. In addition, spending per student at primary and secondary levels is among the lowest in the region.⁹
- There is a tendency towards a decrease in numbers of pupils in basic education. In upper secondary education, the number of pupils has plummeted due to the transformation of the basic education system structure (including upper secondary education) from a four-year to a three-year cycle.
- Attendance in secondary schools has increased (see Table 2.1) due to: high motivation of pupils to attend secondary education; public awareness of the need and benefits of pursuing further education; better infrastructure and logistics in the remote areas where secondary education schools are based; improvement of curricula and teaching methods, and higher labour market demand for better educated individuals, which have raised the progression rate. The drop in secondary education enrolment rates in the 2008-2009 academic year resulted from basic education being prolonged to nine years of study.
- The number of teachers in basic education is steady. In 2007-2008 there was a decline in the number of secondary school teachers involved in teaching, slightly changing one year later. Nonetheless, the decrease in the number of teachers is progressive (less than 1751 placements in two years since 2009-2011).
- The pupil-teacher ratio in upper and lower secondary schooling is relatively high.

⁹World Bank (2011) *Albania Keeping Account of Education Governance - Household Perceptions in a Period of Reform*, March 28.

- The net basic education school enrolment ratio is high but only 90 % of enrolled students complete the four years of compulsory primary school (UNICEF, 2011).
- The number of female teachers in basic education has steadily increased from 65% in 2004 to 71% in 2010. In upper secondary education, the percentage of female teachers was 57.2% in 2004 and rose to 62.2% in 2010.

Table 1.2 Key statistics on primary and secondary education*

Description	Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Public expenditure on education as % of GDP	-	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.42	3.44	3.25	
Public expenditure on education as % of government expenditure	-	13.2	11.1	11.9	10.2	11.4	11.2	
Pupils in primary education**		466 810	447 302	428 435	457 886	439 995	420 684	-
Pupils in secondary school (FTE/Part time)**		150 148 / 15 321	148 895 / 17 856	159 294 / 18 278	118 053 / 14 750	123 999/ 12 297	131 470/ 18 664	-
Teachers in primary education**		27 157	26 540	26 102	27 724	27 241	25 973	-
Teachers in secondary education**		7 997	8 424	8 761	8 046	8 250	8 179	-
Pupil-teacher ratio in primary education**		18	17	17	17	17	17	-
Pupil-teacher ratio in secondary education**		21	20	20	16	16	18	-
School enrolment in primary schools (% net)	-	94	92.2	89.3	88.4	-	99	
School enrolment in secondary schools (% net)	-	55.3	57.6	59.9	60.5	-	80	
Percentage of female teachers in primary schools	-	-	-	80.89	81.96	81.78	-	
Percentage of female teachers in secondary schools	-	-	-	61.22	61.44	62.08	-	
Primary school completion rate, total (% of relevant age group)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Youth literacy rate ¹⁰	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

*Missing data could not be found on relevant national and international websites and have not been provided by the Ministry.

**Data refers to the situation at the beginning of the school year (e.g. 2005/2006, 2006/2007).

Source: The Ministry of Education and Science, March 2013.

¹⁰Understood as a percentage of people aged 15-24 who can, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life, <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1536>

2 Government policy in the area of teacher education

It is the aim of this section to outline the main legislative and institutional framework, national policies, reforms and strategies addressing primary and secondary education as well as school teacher education at initial and in-service level. The section ends with a list of envisaged future developments in these areas.

2.1 Legislative framework

The main legal bases, which regulate primary and secondary education as well as teacher education and training in Albania, include the following documents¹¹:

- The Law No. 69 of 21.6.2012 on the Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania is the key legal act on teacher education, which aims at modernising the teacher education and qualification system. The law regulates the criteria for initial and continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers, i.e. the academic degrees teachers should obtain in order to teach at different levels of the education system. Concerning continuing professional development, Article 58 stipulates compulsory teacher training, which is a minimum of 3 days per year.
- The Law No. 10171 of 22.10.2009 on Regulated Professions in the Republic of Albania, with amendments, regulates the teaching profession and: 'a) determines the criteria for practice of some important occupations, which are related to the protection of public interest, public safety and health, while respecting the principles of professional independent scrutiny and autonomy; b) protects and guarantees the fulfilment of standards for certain important professions, so the qualified persons meeting these criteria by this law, or other laws, are those who practice these professions'.¹²
- The regulations of the Ministry of Education on the Organisation and Conduct of Professional Practice for Teaching as a Regulated Profession aim to ensure quality of teaching and high performance in the teaching profession, acquisition of theoretical and professional knowledge, skills and habits, practical and ethical norms of conduct of teachers, capacity development of future teachers in terms of adaptability and readiness for changes in the curricula, teaching and communication with children and youth. The regulations set the aims of professional practice (i.e. mentoring standards and responsibilities, application procedure guidelines, as well as applicant assessment procedures) and define the roles of higher education institutions (HEIs) that have teacher education programmes.¹³
- The Labour Code¹⁴ and the Collective Agreement dated 25.05.2010, drafted pursuant to the Labour Code, set forth teachers' rights as employees.¹⁵
- Other specific legal documents regulating the employment in the education sector (e.g. procedures of the recruitment, selection and appointment) include: Normative Provisions (2002); Order of the Minister of Education and Science No. 490, dated 27.12.2005; Order of the Minister of Education and Science No. 22, dated 18.09.2006, on the Appointment of Teaching and Management Staff in Pre-university Education; Code of the Ministry of Education and Science No. 8937, dated

¹¹National Plan for the Implementation of the Stabilisation Association Agreement 2012 – 2015, Council of Ministers, 2012.

¹²Latifi, J., Mita, N., Country profile: Albania, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana, Faculty of Law Justicia University.

¹³Abdurrahmani, T., Boce, E. (2011) *Pre-service, teacher training reform in Albania: a review*. In: Beginning teachers: a challenge for educational systems, Patrick Picard and Luc Ria (eds.), CIDREE Yearbook 2011, Lyon: École normale supérieure de Lyon, Institut Français de l'Éducation.

¹⁴<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/SERIAL/41344/63433/>

¹⁵Albanian Ministry of Education and Science replies to European Commission's Questionnaire on 'Chapter 26, Education, Youth and Culture', data completed in 2010.

22.12.2005, for Schools with the Status of 'National-level Schools'; Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 66 of 03.02.2010 on Establishing the Regional Education Departments and Education Offices.¹⁶

- The Law No. 9741 of 21.5.2007 on Higher Education in the Republic of Albania, amended by a new Law No. 10, 307, dated 22.07.2010, and the Council of Ministers Decrees on admission quotas and enrolment fees in public higher education institutions (HEIs), regulate the access to public and private HEIs.¹⁷ The law also specifies key principles for establishing HEIs and 'provides for institutional, financial, and academic and research autonomy and self-governance'.¹⁸

Other relevant documents of the legislative framework are:

- The Law No. 8652 of 31.7.2000 on the Organisation and Functioning of Local Governance.
- The Law No. 10247 of 2010 on the Albanian Qualifications Framework.
- Normative Provisions for Pre-university Education approved by the Ministry of Education and Science in 2002.
- Bylaw acts on pre-university education, issued by the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Education and Sciences.¹⁹
- Decisions of the Council of Ministers in establishing the following bodies: the National Agency for Education, Vocational Education and Qualifications (2011); the National Agency for Examinations (2010); the Institute of Education Development (2010); the National Inspectorate of Pre-university Education (2010).
- Decision of the Council of Ministers No 78 of 08.02.2006 on the Establishment of the State Matura and admission to schools, with amendments (Decision No. 876 of 03.11.2010).

The above listed legal acts show that the framework of educational legislation in Albania has received considerable attention after signing the Bologna declaration in 2003. Yet, whereas the goals of the Bologna process have been addressed by a number of laws and bylaws in Albania, the main challenge that remains is 'to make the Bologna process a reality'. As one of the steps in this direction, it has been noted by World Bank experts that 'the codification of the existing legal rules in terms of a comprehensive and transparent legal system' is further required, so that existing regulations could be understood by all stakeholders in the education sector.²⁰ The legal framework is currently at a stage where the legislation is not always reflected in the actual processes in the education system. Legal documents, particularly the new Law No. 69 of 21.6.2012 on the Pre-university Education System, refer to the reform of primary and secondary education as a fully-fledged completed process, while the reform is in fact underway and the older system is still in place.

Other challenges include a lack of legal acts underpinning the new standards of teacher education: the standards and competences for teacher education and for school principals have been designed by the Institute for Development of Education (IDE) but have not been adopted. Therefore their implementation remains to be addressed. It is essential to clarify which competences potential teachers should develop during initial teacher education (ITE). ITE standards need to be finalised and approved. A lack of clear standards for mentors, defining their responsibilities during professional practice in the induction period, has also been noted. There are no legal provisions concerning training of teachers by Regional

¹⁶Latifi, J., Mita, N., Country profile: Albania, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana, Faculty of Law Justicia University.

¹⁷European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Latifi, J., Mita, N., Country profile: Albania..., op. cit.

²⁰Ministry of Education and Science, World Bank (2010) Education Excellence and Equity Project (ID 4180 ALB) Final Report. Development of an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Bologna Process Preparation of Higher Education Standards per Teaching Cycles According to the Demands of the Bologna Process, German Academic Exchange Service, Finnish Consulting Group.

Educational Directorates /Education Offices despite the fact that a budget has been allocated to RED/EO for teacher education, which has not been used for the given purpose.

The relation between HEIs and schools during the induction phase is not regulated by any formal means, which limits the effectiveness of professional practice.

Teacher education is addressed by different acts of legislation and national documents related to the overall reform of pre-university education, but it remains a challenge to connect these fragments together into a coherent model.

2.2 Institutional framework

The Albanian education system at the national, local and school level is supported by the following institutions²¹:

a) At national level:

- The Ministry of Education and Science is the main governmental body responsible for implementing education policies and management of the entire education system.²² This responsibility is devolved to Regional Education Departments (which are not decentralised government units) and Educational Offices that function at local level (as described below).²³ Other dependant bodies are the National Agency of Examinations (NAE) in which the National Agency of Admissions in Higher Education Institutions (NAAHEI) is included, the National Inspectorate of Pre-university Education (NIPE), the National Agency of Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) and the Institute of Development of Education (IDE). The Ministry also cooperates with universities and the Council for Higher Education and Science towards the reform of the teacher education system.
- The National Inspectorate of Pre-university Education (NIPE) inspects teaching quality and evaluates the functioning of the education system. Through the inspection of schools and teachers in their daily work, NIPE reports feed the process of designing criteria for training needs. With regard to initial education of teachers, NIPE participates in bodies that implement accreditation of HEIs, in particular those with teacher education programmes of study.
- The Institute of Education Development (IDE) is responsible for drafting and developing curricula and standards for pre-university education, except vocational education and management of teacher training.²⁴ It has been involved in activities such as: a) designing policy recommendations for the initial teacher education for HEIs and the Ministry; b) implementing the annual national teacher testing process in the framework of the qualification of teachers; c) designing policy recommendations for the training needs for continuing professional training (CPD) of teachers, and d) providing informative sessions to pre-university teachers on the curricular reform and professional training of teachers.
- The National Council of Pre-university Education is an advisory body of the Ministry of Education on the development of policies of pre-university education. The National Council provides opinions on draft strategies, national programmes and legal acts,

²¹National Plan for the Implementation of Stabilisation Association Agreement 2012 – 2015, Council of Ministers; Law on Pre-university Education, European Commission's Questionnaire ...,op.cit.

²²The Ministry's responsibilities and competencies are defined in the legal acts: Law No. 7952 of 21.06.1995 on Pre-university Education System, with amendments; Law No. 9741 of 21.05.2007 on Higher education in the Republic of Albania, with amendments; Law No. 8872 of 29.03.2002 on Vocational education and training in the Republic of Albania, with amendments, and normative provisions.

²³Barr, A.,Packard, T., Serra, D. (2012) *Participatory Accountability and Collective Action: Experimental Evidence from Albanian Schools*, October.

²⁴World Bank (2011) *Albania Keeping Account of Education Governance - Household Perceptions in a Period of Reform*, March.

and budget for pre-university education, as well as other issues related to educational policies.²⁵

- The National Agency of Examinations (NAE), established in 2010, is a technical and professional special institution for the organisation of national examinations in the pre-university system, entry examinations to universities and state examinations of the regulated professions.

b) At regional level:

- Regional Educational Directorates (REDs) are responsible for: policy development and the implementation of the pre-university education system; human resources management; quality assurance in public and non-public schools, and evaluation of the teacher's portfolio and supervision of the administration of the national testing of teachers for gaining their qualification levels. There are 13 Directorates across 12 regions.
- Educational Offices (EOs) are part of 254 municipalities across the country responsible for assisting the teaching and education process, managing human resources and statistics. They also monitor curricular and extra-curricular activities and manage financial resources allocated to their unit.
- Regional Councils are bodies elected at the local level, in charge of allocation of funds for education.
- Municipality/Commune Councils are responsible for the implementation of investment funds in the field of education, within their administrative territory, and funds transferred by the central budget either in the form of conditional grants or as unconditional grants for school maintenance.²⁶

c) At school level:

- The School Directorate consists of a headmaster and one or two deputy headmasters, depending on the number of pupils attending the school. Headmasters are responsible for the quality of the teaching/educational process and administrative management.
- The Parents' Council is an advisory body which serves to enhance the cooperation and links between schools and pupils' families. It is composed of parent-class representatives elected by parents of pupils (who also elect parents as representative on the school board).²⁷
- The School Board is also an advisory body representing the whole school community, including possible business partners, and involving all representatives in assisting school management. It is involved in issues such as: adoption of curricula and textbooks, and the examinations and approval of annual and mid-term plans including the annual financial report.²⁸
- The Student Body represents pupils in relation to the School Directorate by addressing their learning progress, subject-related issues, relations with teachers and principal, pupils' interests and priorities.

The new legal framework (see Section 2.1) and policies (see Section 2.3) target decentralising the governance of pre-university education by increasing the autonomy of schools and promoting more competencies and institutional rights among local government units. As a result of this trend, a greater involvement of local governments, schools, and

²⁵The Council is to be chaired by the Minister and shall consist of fourteen members (from various ministries, the association of the municipalities, social partners, national association of parents, and outstanding personalities for their contribution in the field of education, science and public life) (Article 29 of the Law on Pre-university Education).

²⁶European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.

²⁷Barr, Packard, Serra (2012) Participatory Accountability and Collective Action..., op.cit'.

²⁸European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.

parents in the educational process is expected. This process is to be accompanied by strengthening the links between the pre-university education sector and the community in the education decision-making process.²⁹

2.3 National reforms addressing primary and secondary education

Conceptual and structural reorganisation of the primary and secondary education systems undertaken in Albania in recent years is discussed below. Reforms that address school teachers specifically are illustrated in Section 2.4.

a) New policy framework on education

In the last decade, the education sector has undergone a reform process reflected in new legal regulations (see Section 3.1) and a number of strategies as discussed below:

- The National Education Strategy 2004-2015 (draft National Education Strategy 2013-2020), concentrates on pre-university education and, inter alia, on improving 'the quality of teaching and learning' and ensuring provision of teacher development activities.³⁰ It also recognises that a solid basis for teacher education can be 'achieved through building the specific competences of pre-university teachers, which are seen as a crucial part of the university curricula, especially professional practice'. The Strategy calls for introduction of cross-curricular competences for basic education teachers and subject integration competences for lower middle school education. It also articulates the need for awarding the teaching profession a special status of public service.³¹
- The Pre-university Education Strategy does not address teacher education directly, but gives a picture of policies and strategic priorities of pre-university education. It envisages improvement of quality of teaching by a thorough reform of the CPD of teachers and school principals through a system of credits, and through improvement of human capacities in schools by designing teacher and performance standards.³²
- The Higher Education Strategy 2008-2013 determines the need for new teaching methods and content of the curriculum of most (undergraduate) programmes to meet the future needs of society and the economy.
- The Draft Higher Education Strategy 2013-2020 lists priorities for higher education such as improvement of quality, consolidation of HEIs' capacities and potential, boosting research activity, and increasing accountability of HEIs.³³
- The National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013 emphasises the need to extend access to higher education and improved teaching quality through human resource development as the strategic priorities of the higher education system.³⁴

In the opinion of some stakeholders interviewed in this study, the limited budget for education does not reflect the importance assigned to education reform in various documents (see also Section 1.5). The priorities of state expenditure in the sector have also been questioned. Whereas most of the education budget is spent on rehabilitation of schools, infrastructure, and increasing teachers' salaries, little is left for improving the quality aspect of education.

²⁹ Ikonomi, E., Musai, B., Sotirofski, K. (2010) *Mapping policies and practices for the preparation of teachers for inclusive education in contexts of social and cultural diversity – Albania country report*, a report prepared by SCIENTER and Centre for Education Policy, Camilleri, A.F., Pantić, N. (eds.), European Training Foundation.

³⁰ Ikonomi, Musai, Sotirofski (2010) *Mapping policies and practices*, op. cit.

³¹ Abdurrahmani, Boce (2011) *Pre-service, teacher training reform in Albania*, op.cit.

³² Ibid.

³³ The Draft Higher Education Strategy 2013-2020, the Ministry of Education and science.

³⁴ Council of Ministers (2008) *National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013*; Abdurrahmani, Boce (2011) *Pre-service, teacher training reform in Albania*, op.cit.

Another issue concerns knowledge sharing and democratisation of changes when implementing reforms. It has been implied that new policies are often not well-understood and not well-accepted by teachers and hence they do not bring the expected outcomes. This is further exacerbated by the lack of links between the reforms of the education system and teacher preparation. For example, the draft Higher Education Strategy 2013 – 2020 has been pointed out as lacking direct references to teacher education, which is seen as a major shortcoming considering the question of quality in the teaching sector.³⁵ As these two spheres remain separate, the universities providing pre-service teaching are not aligned with recent significant changes taking place in schools. Finally, there is also a clear need for more research in the field of education, as reports published by central bodies are criticised as not based on in-depth analysis and study of the subject. The main sources of information on the teaching profession currently available are academic dissertations prepared by students.

b) Structural reform of basic education system

Over the last decade, basic education has gone through two major structural reforms. The first reform concentrated on the transformation of the pre-university education system from 8-year compulsory education (4 years of primary education and 4 years of lower secondary education) to 9 years (5 years of elementary education and 4 years of lower secondary education). The second reform, which will be implemented from the 2015-2016 school year, has changed the structure of the pre-university education system: primary education has been extended again to 6 years of basic education, while the duration of lower secondary education has been reduced from 4 years to 3 years. Whereas compulsory education lasting 9 years is already in place, primary education is still 5 years.

c) Curriculum reform

The structural reform of the education system of Albania is accompanied by a curricular reform, embracing both the primary and lower secondary education level. The reform aims at promoting a student-centred approach and introducing an integrated approach to learning reflected in the basic education curriculum (also the integration of IT in education).³⁶ The draft document, Curriculum Framework of Pre-university Education (2012),³⁷ is divided into several sections, one of which addresses effective teaching and learning, and assessment.³⁸

The new secondary school structure and the new teaching curriculum were implemented for the first time during the academic year 2009/2010. The new curriculum is informed by the Finnish model and features European key competences and serves as a canvas for wider, on-going curricular reform. It has the following features:

- It is composed of nine key curriculum areas: Albanian Language and Literature, Foreign Languages; Mathematics; Technology, IT & Computing; Natural Sciences; Social Sciences; Arts; Physical Education and Sports; Career Promotion and Personal Growth.
- It consists of the core curriculum, which is compulsory for all pupils, and the elective curriculum which contains a list of required elected subjects approved by the Ministry and a list of free-choice subjects or modules.

³⁵Stakeholder consultations (interview, teacher education provider), Tirana, 19.02.2013.

³⁶European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.

³⁷Draft Curriculum Framework of Pre-university Education, Tirana, 2012, <http://www.cfce.crca.al/sites/default/files/download/research/Korniza%20Kurrikulare%20e%20Arsimit%20ne%20P%20arauniversitar.pdf>

³⁸In line with Chapter VII of the draft curriculum, the realisation of the objectives of the curriculum requires the implementation of effective teaching and learning that: are based on the belief that every student can be successful, on knowledge, skills and attitudes of students, on planning for learning objectives, and the principle of integration; enable lifelong learning and the application of knowledge; promote student-teacher partnerships in the process of teaching and learning; include learning in small groups, based on real situations; are developed on the basis of multiple sources of information; rely on ICT and systematically involve students in experiments and observations (Draft Curriculum Framework of Pre-university Education, Tirana, 2012).

- It comprises teaching standards, course programmes, a curriculum implementation guide and course guides.³⁹

Curriculum reform in the area of basic education is yet to be implemented.

These developments alongside new legal and policy documents (see Sections 2.1 and 2.3a) create the conditions for designing and implementing a coherent curriculum based on the philosophy of integration and developed by a number of stakeholders, such as teachers, specialists and parents, who work in different thematic groups. They will also provide appropriate space for school-based curriculum and other school or local activities in order to achieve the objectives of the curriculum. This goes in line with the planned advancement of curricula decentralisation through the Directorate of Regional Coordination and increased participation of schools and teachers in curricula development. One of the main challenges faced as a part of this reform is the lack of coherence among subjects which otherwise would allow for cross-curricular models.⁴⁰

d) Liberalisation of textbook publishing

Curricular reform involves reviewing of the textbook publishing policy, pupil assessment, teaching methods, programmes and teachers' qualifications as discussed in sub-sections and sections below.⁴¹

In the 2006/2007 school year, the Ministry of Education and Science launched the so-called Alternative Textbook (*Altertektst*) system as part of the curriculum reform.⁴² This reform aims towards the development of a transparent and competitive system of publishing textbooks. It liberalised the process of printing, publishing, and dissemination of pre-university education textbooks by allowing private publishing houses and entities (including foreign publishers) to take part in these activities. Accordingly, the distribution of a variety of textbooks per subject has been improved (as opposed to one available option under the previous system) and children from low income families and children with specific needs receive state support in a form of textbook subsidy.⁴³ According to a recent World Bank report, all primary schools are reported to be using the new curriculum and textbooks.⁴⁴

In order to support this process, Textbook Evaluation⁴⁵, Textbook Approval and Textbook Selection Commissions have been established.⁴⁶ However, some concerns have been voiced about the top-down approach towards appointing their members, pointing out the strong influence from the authorities. According to recent media releases, the *Altertektst* reform is linked to ambiguous practices, which contribute to a monopolistic publishing system, where the Commissions' decisions reflect the preferences of certain officials. Some stakeholders interviewed in this study also expressed their disappointment with managing the textbooks system. They called attention to disputable contracts with publishing houses for profitable purposes of high officials and also the practical exclusion of teachers from the final decision of selection of text books.

³⁹European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.; stakeholder consultations (questionnaire, teacher education provider), 19.03.2013; Latifi, J., Mita, N., Country profile: Albania, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana, Faculty of Law Justicia University.

⁴⁰Abdurrahmani, Boce (2011) Pre-service, teacher training reform in Albania, op. cit.

⁴¹European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.

⁴²DCM No 144, date 08.03.2006.

⁴³European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.

⁴⁴World Bank (2013) Albania: World Bank Group Partnership Program Snapshot, <http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/eca/al-snapshot-mar-2013.pdf>

⁴⁵Consisting of members from the public HEI's, teachers related to the subject, and a linguistic expert.

⁴⁶Smith, I. Hamilton, T. (2013) Risk Analysis of the Albanian Education System, PACA Project, funded by EU and implemented by Council of Europe.

e) Student assessment reform

The State Matura was introduced in the 2005/2006 academic year as the final exam that young adults take at the end of their secondary education.⁴⁷ The examination consists of four parts – two compulsory exams (literature and mathematics) and two optional exams.⁴⁸

In addition, a Compulsory Graduation Examination has been introduced as the final examination upon completion of grade IX. From the 2008/2009 academic year, it is taken only in a written form and administered by external examiners.⁴⁹

The introduction of the State Matura exam was accompanied by a change of admission procedures to public universities. From the academic year 2006/2007, admissions to HEIs take place in line with the 'merit-preference' principle, based on a composite indicator including Matura results, students' performance throughout 4 years of secondary school, and students' preference.⁵⁰ The main factor is the result of all State Matura Exams (80%) and the average of high school grades (20%). The preference factor reflects the order of preference of the study programmes the student has chosen.⁵¹ Applications to universities are made online and the results of the selection are made public by the National Agency of Examinations (NAE).

It has been noted during stakeholder consultations that the result of the State Matura exam is based on a formula which consists of a somewhat complex calculation of coefficients which changes for different subjects based on the field of study. The Ministry has been changing the formula in order to modernise this process and teachers have not been trained to explain appropriately to students the points calculation system behind this formula. Therefore, some students have not been enrolled to HEIs because they wrongly selected their future field of education.

Some positive impacts have also been reported on assessing students' performance through national exams and standardised tests. These include:

- increased fairness of exams;
- increased responsibility of teachers for students' results;
- more efforts by the students to achieve better results;
- increased transparency on the quality of school services;
- possibility to compare the results with PISA assessment.⁵²

f) Institutional reform

The institutional reform has two main elements: establishing new bodies to support the Ministry and shifting more competencies and institutional rights to local government units.

The main bodies set up as a part of this process include: the National Inspectorate of Pre-university Education (NIPE), the Institute of Education Development (IDE), the National Agency of Examinations (NAE), and the National Council of Pre-university Education (please see Section 2.2 on their specific roles and responsibilities).

In terms of the main steps made towards a more flexible and lower degree of centralised management in the education sector, they include:

- starting a new system of financing schools based on the per capita approach and applying this to school equipment and library books;
- granting the REDs a greater accountability and competency to implement local educational policies;⁵³

⁴⁷Nikolovska, M. (2008) HRD country analysis – Albania, ETF Working Paper.

⁴⁸European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.

⁵¹Students also prepare an application with a list of 10 preferences for their studies from the most important to the least important one for them.

⁵²Stakeholder consultations (questionnaire, National Agency of Examinations).

- making the EOs relatively more independent of RED competencies;
- re-organising School Boards to include representatives from local government unit (municipality or commune), and parents' and pupils' communities.⁵⁴

The last point reflects the Ministry's attempt to encourage the participation of pupils and parents in school decision-making (see Section 2.2).

2.4 National reforms, policies, and programmes on teacher education

Policies, action plans, and strategies outlining priority directions and support for the implementation of changes in relation to teacher education in Albania are listed below.

a) Three-cycle education system

Following the adoption of the Bologna Declaration on 18 September 2003, Albania has been restructuring its higher education system. In line with this reform, Albania departed from a system where the main qualifications have been a Diploma (Master) obtained after four years of full-time study, a Second Level Master after a further year of study, and a Doctorate (Doctor of Science).⁵⁵ Accordingly, study programmes have been reorganised in terms of content and structure (modular and generally term-based curricula, modules accompanied by full syllabuses) and from the 2008/2009 academic year they are based on a three-cycle system (Bachelor, Master and Doctoral Degree) with a number of credits (ECTS) allocated to each cycle.⁵⁶

In line with these developments, the '3+N structure' for the initial teacher education model was established in 2008, whereby the first three years coincide with the first cycle of education on a specific subject and with a modular flexibility to study more than one subject. Accordingly, the '+N' period consists of one or two additional years of subject teacher or elementary education teacher preparation.⁵⁷

b) Modernised curricula for teacher education

Curricula of teacher education faculties and departments have also undergone a reform, with the development of clear guidelines relating to the core curriculum and reduced number of subjects. They are now more focused on pedagogical and methodological aspects, key skills, ICT, the English language, research and teaching practices in schools. In addition, as stated by some experts, 'the process of the compilation of the teacher education curriculum (...) has also taken the labour market into consideration' and 'it reflects the actual needs of the profession of teachers.'⁵⁸

Yet the implementation of the Bologna process in the initial teacher education area faces some challenges. Universities reforming teacher education curricula do not have adequate knowledge of learning outcomes- and competence-based curricula in school (primary and secondary education), and thus cannot adequately prepare the teachers to implement them.⁵⁹ In consequence, the new curricula structure at the teacher education faculties and departments was applied without fundamental changes in the design and content of university courses.⁶⁰ The instruments applied in the design of initial teacher education

⁵³For instance, by establishing a unit within their structures to 'coordinate and develop regional projects so as to improve quality of school services in their areas' and by compiling a list of schools according to a set of indicators, including those set by RED/EO in compliance with relevant local educational policies.

⁵⁴European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.

⁵⁵Ministry of Education and Science, World Bank, Education Excellence and Equity Project, op.cit.

⁵⁶European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.

⁵⁷Abdurrahmani, Boce (2011) Pre-service, teacher training reform in Albania, op. cit.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Stakeholder consultations (interview, teacher education provider), 19.02.2013.

⁶⁰Musai, B., Dharmo, M., Muka, P., and Rapti, E. (2005) National report: Albania. In: South East European Educational Co-operation Network, The Prospects of Teacher Education in South East Europe (pp. 95-133), http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/workshop/tesee/dokumenti/book/Albania.pdf.

curriculum to analyse the trends of the labour market and current trends in pre-university education have also been questioned.⁶¹

c) Compulsory CPD teacher training

According to the Law on Pre-university Education (2012)⁶², it is now compulsory for every teacher to undertake 3 days of training per year (in training modules accredited by the Ministry of Education). The Institute for Development of Education (IDE), under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Science, designs questionnaires for teachers in order to recognise their needs in relation to their professional development. Every two years, IDE prepares priorities for teacher training for schools.

d) Out-sourcing CPD teacher training

Continued professional development of teachers in Albania has been out-sourced to external service providers, marking a transition from a supply-based system to a demand-based system, which is expected to be more efficient.⁶³ The external providers can be accredited public and private HEIs, private agencies, NGOs, or foundations. The accreditation is conducted by the Committee for Accreditation of Training Programmes, which accredits training courses or modules of training based on a credit system.⁶⁴ Accordingly, accredited agencies prepare a list of training opportunities for further professional development of teachers. Themes and topics of training correspond to the Ministry's priorities and previously identified teachers' needs (by IDE).

Given that the outsourced training system has been adopted only recently, there is no fully-fledged assessment of its implementation.

e) Teachers' pay increase

There has been an increase in teacher salaries in public schools, which now amount to approx. 260-300 EUR per month.⁶⁵ According to the Ministry of Education and Science, this reform is to prevent teachers from taking up alternative professions (retention) and attract new and qualified teachers (attraction). It can be supposed that an increasing number of students who are pursuing pedagogical and educational studies between 2008 and 2010 results mainly from the salary increase policy.

Yet, although the salary is now comparable to other professions in Albania, it still lags behind other countries in the Western Balkans.⁶⁶ In addition, some teachers from an upper secondary school in Tirana revealed that the salary increase is proportionate to the increase in workload and teacher-pupil ratio in the class. This in turn results in degrading working conditions and a belittling perception of teachers by pupils. The system has also been criticised for not rewarding the quality of teachers' work, as there are no defined indicators that measure and assess the quality of teaching and learning in order to motivate teachers.⁶⁷

f) New model of teacher education

The main innovation expected in line with the above mentioned changes will be a new model of teacher education that resembles more advanced European models. It will be based on:

⁶¹ Abdurrahmani, Boce (2011) Pre-service, teacher training reform in Albania, op. cit.

⁶² The Law No 60 of 21.6.2012 on Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania.

⁶³ European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op. cit.

⁶⁴ Article 7, Regulation for the Accreditation System of Training Programmes, the Ministry of Education and Science, 09.03.2011.

⁶⁵ Project against corruption in Albania (PACA), a study funded by EU and implemented by CoE 'Underpinning integrity in the Albanian Education System: Compilation of PACA outputs', June 2013.

⁶⁶ Stakeholder consultations (interview, education expert), Tirana, 19.03.2013.

⁶⁷ Stakeholder consultations (questionnaire, trade union), 21.02.2013.

- introduction of the subject of 'research' from the first year of Bachelor studies and modules built on the concept of creating new knowledge, discussing different views, presenting arguments and evidence, to make the teaching more attractive;
- introduction of the subject of Information and Communication Technology to gain skills of communication, presentation techniques and the use of information technology;
- institutionalisation of the school's professional practice to make it a key element in the new teacher education structure and bring closer the theory and the school reality;
- requirement of a research thesis at the end of initial teacher education;
- introduction of a 'minor' specialisation on the second level Master studies to increase competences of future teachers and better adapt to the needs of schools of different sizes;
- establishing teaching and learning excellence centres to bring universities closer to the labour market by equipping students with teaching skills and innovation in education and ensuring continuous lifelong learning of teachers (e.g. preparation of teacher mentors, in-service training activities);
- establishing partnerships between teacher education institutions, schools and teacher educational institutions;
- introduction of professional competency-based learning and standards-based assessment.⁶⁸

2.5 Forecast of policy needs in the field of teacher education

According to the literature review and stakeholder consultations, the following needs and challenges were identified in the field of teacher education and training in Albania:

- Encouraging changes in teaching methodology to include new teaching methods in the universities that could be then used by prospective teachers in their future work;⁶⁹
- Development and introduction of incentive schemes for teachers, based on their performance (merit-based pay) rather than on the length of service, and other initiatives directed at increasing the prestige of the teaching profession;
- Development of a conceptual model for the teacher education curricula that includes issues of social inclusion, social cohesion and children with special needs, to create equal opportunities for all vulnerable groups;
- Emphasis on cross-curricular competences for primary school teachers and competences on integrated approaches to teaching and learning for teachers at the secondary level of education in teacher education programmes;
- Introducing alternative modes of delivering CPD to ensure its quality and efficiency (e.g. intensive block training, distance learning, or a combination of both);
- Further decentralisation of teacher professional development, implemented via a decentralised process by REDs, in order to respond to regional, local, and school needs in annual plans for teacher education;
- Encouraging and regulating partnerships/arrangements between schools and teacher education institutions.

In addition, governmental measures that address teacher education and training have been assessed by some stakeholders as not responding to the needs of teachers, mainly due to limited resources and the lack of know-how on implementation. The assessment of teachers' needs prior to implementation of reforms has been identified as a key pre-condition for their efficient implementation.

⁶⁸Musai, B. (2010) Formimi i Mësuesve në Përputhje me Kërkesat e Shoqërisë së Dijes [Teacher education in compliance with the knowledge society needs] quoted in Abdurrahmani, Boce (2011) Pre-service, teacher training reform in Albania, op.cit.

⁶⁹Abdurrahmani, Boce (2011) Pre-service, teacher training reform in Albania, op. cit.

3 Organisation of initial teacher education (ITE)

The following section reflects on the organisation of primary and secondary school teacher education at initial level. It first looks at the key institutions providing the initial teacher education and methods of financing it. Then, it describes how initial teacher education is approached in Albania, with a special focus on admission procedures, education programmes, curricula, and assessment methods.

3.1 Providers and financing of ITE

The initial teacher training is provided by private and public higher education institutions (HEIs). Regarding public universities, the teaching faculties at Durrës, Elbasan, Gjirokastër, Korça, Shkodër and Vlova universities prepare elementary school teachers. Lower secondary school teachers are trained at teaching faculties at Elbasan, Gjirokastër, Korça, Shkodër and Vlova universities. The preparation of upper secondary school teachers takes place at the University of Tirana, Gjirokastër, Korça and Shkodër. Teachers of physical education are prepared at the Sports Academy.⁷⁰ There are 13 private universities that offer 16 programmes in teacher education.

In terms of financing teacher education and training, public universities that provide teacher education are financed mainly from the state budget. Only a small share of financing comes from revenues gathered from teaching charges, secondary quotas or services offered to third parties by teacher education departments.⁷¹

3.2 Admission procedures

Students who want to continue their education at the university level should successfully pass the State Matura exam and obtain the required number of points to be enrolled in the field of study they have selected prior to Matura (see Section 2.3.5).⁷² In addition, they are obliged to pay an enrolment fee in order to be admitted to the first cycle programmes in public HEIs (in the 2009/2010 academic year, it amounted to 100 - 250 EUR).⁷³

As stated by stakeholders interviewed for this study, the applicants enrolled to teaching specialisation are usually students with the lowest Grade Point Average (GPA) in the faculty. Students with high GPA choose other specialisations such as sociologists, chemists, physician etc. instead of teaching. The main factors pointed out as contributing to this problem are: low teacher salary (albeit increasing), limited perspectives for graduates to work in a different field (change of profession), high unemployment rate among teachers, low prestige associated to the teaching profession and lack of incentives for novice teachers to work in rural and undeveloped areas.

According to some stakeholders, there is no need for incentives to increase the number of teachers as there are many universities that prepare teachers and an increase in the number of students in teaching faculties is required. In fact, the recent increase in enrolment in the initial teacher education programme, encouraged by universities, is perceived as compromising the quality of student preparation. What has been indicated as requiring strong emphasis was the labour market analysis to assess the need for teachers in urban and rural areas and tailoring the teaching programmes according to the opening positions for teachers.⁷⁴

⁷⁰Studies in the field of psychology and education are carried out by inter-faculty education departments (Abdurrahmani, Boce (2011) Pre-service, teacher training reform in Albania..., op.cit.).

⁷¹Hatakenaka, S. and Thompson, Q. (2006) Albania Higher Education Report: Report submitted to the European Investment Bank.

⁷²In some cases (e.g. in such disciplines as Arts, Sports and Architecture) students also have to take an additional admission test (European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.).

⁷³European Commission's Questionnaire ..., op.cit.

⁷⁴Project against corruption in Albania (PACA) study funded by EU and implemented by CoE, 'Underpinning integrity in the Albanian Education System: Compilation of PACA outputs', June 2013.

3.3 Education programmes

Initial education in HEIs can take the form of full-time or part-time studies divided into two cycles. The education of teachers varies according to the cycle of studies and type of education programme. The types of programmes for primary and secondary school teachers include: primary education teacher, subject teacher, subject teacher for lower secondary education, and subject teacher for upper secondary education.⁷⁵

Primary education teachers are prepared through Bachelor programmes and they continue their studies until receiving a Master's degree. Teachers in different disciplines (subject teachers) major in different technical-professional fields (e.g. in one or two subjects) during their Bachelor's programme before they start their Master's in subject teaching. There is only one Bachelor's programme for subject teachers.⁷⁶

The first-cycle studies are organised as study programmes valued with 180 ECTS and their regular duration is three years. At the end of the first cycle study programme, a diploma of first level Bachelor is issued in the field of the programme completed. Second-cycle studies are organised as study programmes valued with 120 ECTS and last two years, after which a diploma of a second level is issued. After the first-cycle studies, students may also continue education during one-year Master studies (Master of first level), aiming at a deeper scientific and pedagogical development for the teaching profession.⁷⁷

There are no special programmes for teachers who are teaching technical subjects (e.g. agriculture, technology, economy, arts) in primary or secondary schools. They usually attend a Master programme in teaching and learning in order to become knowledgeable in the methodology of teaching, and after that they learn by doing, or attend some short courses or additional Master's programmes.⁷⁸

Table 3.1 Teacher education programmes

Cycle	Name	Length
I	Bachelor Degree	3 years
II	Master of Arts, Master of Science	2 years
II	Master of Professional Studies	1-1.5 years
III	Doctorate Studies	3 years

3.4 Curricula and teacher education standards

Universities (i.e. faculty councils and academic senates) are responsible for teacher education curricula. There is no general document on teacher competencies or standards for ITE. The profile of future teachers, their competences, curricula and mission, are described in the university documents submitted to the Agency for Accreditation and the Ministry when applying for permission to offer teacher education programmes.

The standards for teacher education and competences have been designed by IDE but are still in the process of approval by the Minister of Education and Science. They include two kinds of standards: general standards and subject content standards. They define, among other areas, teachers' scientific competences, teaching and learning competences, competences for teaching and learning for pupils with difficulties, teachers' ethics and conduct, and collaboration with the community.

⁷⁵Vula, E., Saqipi, B., Karaj, T. and Mita, N. (2012) Moving towards Practice-Oriented and Research-Based Teacher Education, Excellence in Higher Education, Volume 3, Number 1, June, pp. 37-45, <http://ehe.pitt.edu>

⁷⁶Ibid; stakeholder consultations (interview, teacher education provider), Tirana, 20.03.2013.

⁷⁷European Commission's Questionnaire ...,op.cit.

⁷⁸Stakeholder consultations (interview, teacher education provider), Tirana, 19.02.2013.

Due to the current lack of national standards on teacher education, there are significant pedagogical differences between curricula offered by various universities. The number of university courses differs for each university as does the composition of the programme and organisation of the subjects during a semester. Some experts suggest that the government, as the main employer of teachers, should define the requirements for teachers and specify the core curriculum for their preparation.⁷⁹

There are, however, some basic common components of teacher education curricula, such as pedagogical (professional) preparation⁸⁰, specialised subject preparation, school practice and the final exam or thesis.⁸¹ Pedagogical courses usually account for 35% of the total number of ECTS credits and are better incorporated in curricula for secondary school teachers. The rest are 'academic' courses, generally focusing on one major subject.

Starting from the 2008/2009 academic year, the component of research has been strengthened and emphasised. All Master degree programmes are to realise the aims of the research component through: (a) a course on research in education, (b) integration of teaching with research, and (c) a research Master's thesis.⁸² Nevertheless, some recent findings show that developing research skills is a component almost non-existent in teacher education curricula.⁸³

In addition, the programmes are mainly oriented towards general methodology courses, whereas topics such as diversity, gender equality and inclusion or special needs education receive little attention in the initial preparation of teachers. The need for modules on social inclusion in teacher education curricula has been stressed as an urgent problem in the light of an increased rate of returnees (families with children) who, largely due to the economic crisis, arrive in Albania, mainly from Greece and Italy. Many children face serious issues with reintegration in Albania and schools are unprepared to address this issue.

Some experts point out that the ITE system is still primarily subject-based, with a structure that precludes teaching of specific skills and competences (e.g. in inclusion). Teachers, parents and community members echoed these concerns highlighting the rigidity of teacher-training faculties, which leaves no room for adjusting their teaching to student specific needs and results in inadequate teacher preparation for coping with diversity in classrooms.⁸⁴ Similar views were expressed in the Ministry and World Bank's report from 2010 stating that university students are still expected to 'remember a large body of knowledge that is presented didactically, with little regard for time for independent learning, learning outcomes and the students' actual capacities on graduation'. As further stated in the report, the implementation of the student-orientated approach still poses a challenge for university teachers.⁸⁵

These problems stem mainly from inadequate preparation of teacher students for the reality of work in school settings characterised by: 1) predominance of the traditional teacher-input orientated approach; and 2) theoretical approach to pedagogical training, with no formal connection to ensure that student experiences in schools are reflected upon, discussed, shared and presented to the rest of the class.⁸⁶ It has been confirmed by the stakeholder consultations that there is a clear need to detach from purely academic provision in teacher

⁷⁹Hatakenaka, S. and Thompson, Q. (2006) Albania Higher Education Report: Report submitted to the European Investment Bank.

⁸⁰Professional courses are courses that address educational theory and practice including teaching and learning assessment, educational psychology, didactics, etc.

⁸¹Abdurrahmani, Boce (2011) Pre-service, teacher training reform in Albania, op.cit.

⁸²Vula, Saqipi, Karaj, and Mita (2012), op.cit.

⁸³However, this finding is limited since the researchers studied only the available documents - programmes and course descriptions. It is possible that individual course instructors address these themes more in general methodology/education courses. But, the extent and nature of addressing these themes is an instructor's choice (Vula, Saqipi, Karaj, and Mita (2012), op.cit.)

⁸⁴Ikonomi, Musai, Sotirofski (2010) Mapping policies and practices, op. cit.

⁸⁵Ministry of Education and Science, World Bank (2010) Education Excellence and Equity Project, op.cit.

⁸⁶Ibid; Vula, Saqipi, Karaj, and Mita (2012), op. cit.

education programmes. Student teachers lack practical knowledge and most universities do not consider school practice as an important element of initial teacher training.⁸⁷

Currently, there are two models of teaching practice that are applied in ITE: in-class observation and active professional practice. In the framework of observations, students are asked to attend and observe five classes per week. In terms of active practice, student teachers are asked to teach five hours per week.⁸⁸ However, the proportion of time spent specifically on professional training and the number of credits for a teaching internship vary not only across different universities, but also between departments and faculties within the same university (e.g. from 10 ECTS in lower secondary education to 16 ECTS in primary education in the 2010/2011 academic year).⁸⁹

School practice is supervised by the university, which is responsible for assigning students to schools and cooperation with their principals to provide mentorship during students' practice hours. Yet, the tutoring or mentoring system is underdeveloped and there are cases when university teachers responsible for this component of a programme have no experience in school teaching. Also, teachers who are appointed at school to assist practising student teachers often have no qualifications to fulfil this responsibility.

Overall, school practice emerges as the least developed component of the teacher education curriculum. Having been running for many years without any significant changes, it neither secures the provision of required teaching skills, nor meets the demands and needs of teaching faculties.⁹⁰ The main problems faced by universities in this area include:

- the lack of clearly defined pedagogical concept and model of student practice;
- no corresponding syllabi, programmes of work, handbooks and methodology;
- ineffective supervision system of school practice without clearly defined responsibilities and duties of the parties involved;
- weak cooperation with schools;
- lack of resources to support internships;
- no clear assessment criteria;
- short time of the teaching practice (one month).⁹¹

Poor infrastructure, especially with regard to laboratories, libraries, access to electronic journals, general learning environment and bookshops, further contributes to these problems.⁹²

The main changes in relation to school practice, as suggested by new teachers surveyed in a recent study⁹³, should emphasise those elements that bring ITE closer to the teaching reality and equip student teachers with knowledge on 'different contexts of teaching and learning (the characteristics of the students, types of teaching and learning)'. As further proposed by recent graduates from HEIs providing teacher education, this could be achieved by the triggering following developments:

- providing support from mentoring teachers, who have extensive knowledge on different problems related to teaching;
- increasing the number school practice hours;

⁸⁷Stakeholder consultations (interview, international organisation), 19.03.2013.

⁸⁸Vula, Saqipi, Karaj, and Mita (2012), op. cit.

⁸⁹Stakeholder consultations (interview, teacher education provider), 19.02.2013.

⁹⁰Musai, Dharmo, Muka, Rapti, (2005) National report: Albania, op. cit.

⁹¹Vula, Saqipi, Karaj, and Mita (2012), op. cit.

⁹²The Ministry of Education and Science, World Bank, Education Excellence and Equity Project (ID 4180 ALB) Final Report. Development of an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Bologna Process Preparation of Higher Education Standards per Teaching Cycles According to the Demands of the Bologna Process, German Academic Exchange Service, Finnish Consulting Group, May 2010.

⁹³Gani, B. (2013) The professionalisation of new teachers towards the consolidation of their knowledge and competences, Department of Methodology of Teaching, Faculty of Educational Sciences, "A. Xhuvani University", Paper from the 1st Albania International Conference on Education (AICE) July 17, 2013 – August 17, 2013

- introducing a practical module for class administration and evaluation of the competences; and,
- creating possibilities for meetings devoted to peer-learning and exchange of experience.⁹⁴

3.5 Assessment methods

Teaching and assessment methods are mainly based on face-to-face in class teaching and examinations at the end of the semester.⁹⁵ In 2008, writing a thesis connected to school context and practice was introduced as a compulsory element in Bachelor's and Master's programmes. Before 2008, 95% of all student teachers had to take a final written examination to graduate from a four-year Bachelor programme.⁹⁶

As for school practice, the responsible departments appoint a teacher as a supervisor for 15 students. The evaluation of students is based on the evaluation made by the supervisor with the support of a mentor, who is to help the practitioner to successfully perform the school practice.⁹⁷

It has been pointed out by some interviewees that cases of bribery to pass classes and examinations are not uncommon at HEIs. Such unacceptable practice has a negative impact on the overall quality of teacher education.

4 Support for new teachers

The following section is devoted to the provision of personal and professional support ('induction') for new teachers. When there are no systematic and/or national induction programmes, current practices to help novice teachers at the beginning of their career are discussed.

In 2011, the Ministry established a new scheme for teacher students (trainee teachers or novice teachers) to conduct one academic year of professional practice (or 'professional internship', as named in the new law from 2012) in primary or secondary schools. As stated in official documents, the professional practice aims to:

- ensure the quality and high performance in teaching by novice teachers;
- enhance theoretical and professional knowledge, skills and practical habits and ethical norms of teachers' conduct;
- develop the capacity of future teachers to better adjust to changes in curriculum, teaching and communication with children and youth.⁹⁸

Teacher students who graduated from HEIs apply the RED/EO's to be assigned to practice schools. Then, under the supervision of a school principal and a mentor, they perform a full-time teaching practice and fulfil professional obligations similar to those of other teachers of the educational institution in which they are practising. They also prepare a portfolio that includes information on their work experience (e.g. annual training plan, goals, tests, teaching resources and methods used, reflections on her/his experiences in professional practice).⁹⁹ During this time they do not receive remuneration; the induction period counts for their seniority pension and entitles them to social and health benefits.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ministry of Education and Science, World Bank (2010) Education Excellence and Equity Project..., op. cit.

⁹⁶Vula, Saqipi, Karaj, and Mita (2012), op. cit.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Decision No. 336 of 14.07.2011 on the Organisation of Professional Practices for the Regulated Teacher's Profession.

⁹⁹Article 19, Decision No. 336 of 14.07.2011 on the Organisation of Professional Practices for the Regulated Teacher's Profession.

¹⁰⁰Stakeholder consultations (interview, teacher education provider), 20.03.2013.

Specific responsibilities have also been assigned to teacher mentors. A mentor's supervision of a practitioner makes up 1/4 of her/his overall workload and is divided into observation hours (2/3 of the time) and counselling classes (1/3 of the time). The main role of a mentor is to help a trainee teacher, through a number of responsibilities and activities, to successfully perform in professional practice (see Annex 2 on specific role and responsibilities of a mentor). The law also specifies a number of key features that should distinguish a mentor from teachers. These include among others: innovative ideas for interactive teaching and creative professional skills; willingness to collaborate with colleagues; ethical stance with students, colleagues and parents; and communication skills to find a common language with trainees and transmit the scientific information clearly.¹⁰¹

Upon successful completion of one academic year of professional internship and passing the state examinations, teachers are entitled to practise the profession in primary and secondary education (see Section 5.1 below). The decision as to whether a practitioner has successfully passed the professional practice to sit for the final examination in order to obtain the license is determined by the local educational units.¹⁰²

As induction is a new development, of which results are yet to be seen, there are still some practical arrangements that need to be addressed. For example, the idea of mentorship is not supported and the mentor's position is not considered as a step forward on the teacher career scale. The only incentive for teachers to become mentors is fewer teaching hours, but in practice, it is found to be difficult to reduce teaching hours, particularly in primary schools. The issue of salaries for novice teachers also remains unsolved and the responsibilities for licensing are yet to be granted to proper institutions. On the other hand, despite its newness, induction appears to be a more developed activity than school practice in terms of legal documents and by-laws addressing it.¹⁰³

HEIs are not involved in the induction process but according to the law, they should cooperate with IDE to develop orientation programmes for professional practice, based on core competencies of teachers.¹⁰⁴

Finally, it is worth mentioning here that the rules for recruitment and appointment of teachers in public schools have been changed by the Law on the Pre-university Education System (2012). Currently, teachers in national schools are to be recruited through open competitions, chaired by a commission composed by representatives of the Ministry, REDs/EOs and school representatives.¹⁰⁵ The school principals run the final selections based on qualifications and professional suitability. Until recently, the vacancies for teacher positions have not been made public in most cases, which made the recruitment process prone to manipulation by the REDs. Teachers were appointed by the head of RED and the selection was influenced by political preferences and personal contacts with the RED's leadership.¹⁰⁶

5 Continuing professional development of teachers (CPD)

Section 5 describes how continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers is approached in Albania. It looks at the CPD providers and financing of in-service teacher training and identifies

¹⁰¹Other criteria include: proper performance of duties as a member of the staff; good performance during qualifying examination; the second category of teacher training in relevant subject; certificate of mentor (if applicable), good performance in accredited training programmes; high achievements of his/her students during Matura and final exam (Article 10, Decision No. 336 of 14.07.2011 on the Organisation of Professional Practices for the Regulated Teacher's Profession).

¹⁰²European Commission's Questionnaire ...,op.cit.

¹⁰³Stakeholder consultations (interview, teacher education provider), 19.02.2013.

¹⁰⁴Article 9, Decision No. 336 of 14.07.2011 on the Organisation of Professional Practices for the Regulated Teacher's Profession.

¹⁰⁵European Commission's Questionnaire ...,op.cit.

¹⁰⁶Smith, I. Hamilton, T. (2013) Risk Analysis of the Albanian Education System, PACA Project, funded by the EU and implemented by Council of Europe, April.

programmes, practices and activities for teachers' professional development. It also reflects on knowledge, skills and attitudes (values) required from experienced teachers.

5.1 Providers and financing of CPD

In-service teacher training is provided by public or private organisations training agencies with accredited training programmes, selected in open competition, which have sufficient capacities to achieve the objectives and provide the content anticipated by the training programmes.¹⁰⁷ Training is also carried out by non-governmental service providers. The role of universities in in-service teacher training provision is limited in contrast to ITE, which is their dominant activity.

The main central bodies responsible for CPD of teachers are the Unit of Human Resources at the Ministry and IDE. The Ministry is responsible for supervision and organisation of CPD, while IDE plans and compiles the standards and modules for teacher training. IDE is also in charge of the induction period for novice teachers.

At local/regional level, teacher training is organised and managed by the Education Offices, according to the annual plan of training and qualification activities. Training is also organised by schools in line with schools' annual plan of activities in the domain of professional development according to subject departments.¹⁰⁸

As for the financing of in-service teacher training, it comes from the individual contribution of the educational employee, state budget, projects of local and foreign non-profit-making organisations, foundations, institutions, and other legal sources.¹⁰⁹ The budget devoted to teacher training is considered insufficient to meet the needs in this area and teachers claim they have no financial resources to pay for their CPD.¹¹⁰

5.2 Organisation of in-service teacher training

In-service teacher training can take the form of training sessions, professional networks, counselling, or short-term and long-term courses. At school level, a traditional form of peer-learning is to hold 'open classes' on regular basis.¹¹¹

The main areas of in-service teacher training carried out within the national state training system are: application of changes occurring in the curricula for different subjects, introduction of new subjects in school, improving the teaching process through effective methods and strategies, development of cross-curricula and extra-curricular knowledge, development of students' critical thinking, human rights, democratic education, global and European civilisation, health care and environmental education (see also Section 8.3).¹¹²

Professional development of teachers is planned by schools in accordance with their needs and in compliance with the central, local educational policies. Each school has its own annual plan of activities in the domain of professional development according to subject departments.¹¹³

In line with the reform of teacher training currently taking place (see Section 2.4), the training sessions are now provided according to the 'demand – offer' system, based on the requests from the educational institutions and offers from licensed public or private training

¹⁰⁷European Commission's Questionnaire ...,op.cit.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Article 58 of the Law No 60 of 21.6.2012 on Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania.

¹¹⁰According to research results quoted in the National Strategy of Pre-university Education 2009-2013, about 43.1% of the teachers declared they could not afford a single day of qualification training away from their place of residence with their own funds, 18.78% declared they could only afford one day, and only 8.3% stated they could afford more than 5 days. Only a few teachers declared they had the opportunity to use small amounts to purchase pedagogical materials necessary for CPD and attestation.

¹¹¹Stakeholder consultations (questionnaire, Institute for Educational Development), 15.03.2013.

¹¹²Musai, Dharmo, Muka, Rapti (2005) National report: Albania, op. cit.

¹¹³European Commission's Questionnaire...,op.cit.

agencies.¹¹⁴ The Ministry announces the training needs for teachers in the pre-university education system and the content of training programmes is determined by in-service training providers.¹¹⁵ For instance, in accordance with the list of needs for 2011-2013, 14 private entities and 5 state universities applied to the Commission for Accreditation of Training Programmes. Accordingly, the Commission accredited 390 training programmes/modules, which are presented on the IDE's website.¹¹⁶

Documents and training certificates obtained throughout a teacher's career are compiled in a professional portfolio.¹¹⁷ When a teacher wants to obtain a higher qualification category, in addition to passing the test, the portfolio must be submitted to the appropriate local educational unit (REO/EO), where it is reviewed and evaluated by a special committee (see Section 6.1).¹¹⁸ There are three qualification categories that can be obtained respectively after 5, 10 and 20 years of work experience.

Yet, despite recent developments in the CPD area, the legal obligation to participate in three days of professional training per year is considered as not enough to instil a deep change in the routine of teaching practice (see Section 2.4c). The lack of a system for recognition of teachers' achievements - other than compulsory training - in their career scale has also been mentioned as an important barrier for approaching the CPD in a more involved way.

More attention should also be brought to the areas/fields covered by an obligatory three credit points training. Official documents do not specify the field in which training should be obtained (e.g. theory, pedagogy or subject teaching) and there is some tendency among teachers to attend courses that are perceived as easiest. Stakeholders suggested that the Ministry should divide the points to be obtained and oblige teachers to attend courses that will qualify them in more than one area (e.g. subject matter and teaching methodology).

Other concerns relate to the selection of approximately 20 agencies accredited to offer CPD courses to receive funds from REDs (when chosen to provide teacher training). Some leading universities offering accredited CPD for teachers have complained that they have never been selected to offer their services. On the other hand, most HEIs do not consider themselves a part of the in-service teacher training sector and very few applied when a call for accredited modules was launched by the Ministry.¹¹⁹ In addition, as indicated by some stakeholders, universities often do not have capacity to offer quality training for in-service teachers and most CPD courses offered by HEIs are purely theoretical.

6 Teacher qualifications and quality assurance

This section provides information on the qualifications (and diplomas, licenses, certificates, occupational grades) required to become a primary and secondary school teacher. It also explores that licensing system framework at different stages of teacher education and identifies which key stakeholders are involved in the quality assurance process in teacher education.

¹¹⁴ Law No. 69 of 21.6.2012 on Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania.

¹¹⁵ Stakeholder consultations (questionnaire, Institute for Educational Development), 15.03.2013.

¹¹⁶ http://www.izha.edu.al/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=160%3Asistemi-i-akreditimit-te-programmeve-te-trajnimit-te-punonjeseve-arsimore-ne-institucionet-arsimore-dhe-lista-e-moduleve-te-akredituara&catid=1%3Alatest-news&Itemid=1

¹¹⁷ Teacher's portfolio contains a CV, documents, certificates and credits obtained through teaching experience, and is reviewed by a committee set up within the REO/EO where the teacher works (European Commission's Questionnaire ...,op.cit.)

¹¹⁸ European Commission's Questionnaire ...,op.cit.

¹¹⁹ One example is a training programme for teachers of grade XII in upper secondary education on the implementation of the new curriculum reform managed and conducted in 2011 by the Faculty of Natural Science (University of Tirana) in collaboration with the Ministry and IDE.

6.1 Qualification system for primary and secondary school teachers

The Law on Pre-university Education specifies that in order to teach in primary and secondary schools teachers must obtain a second cycle diploma of university studies.¹²⁰ In addition, as provided in the Law on the Regulated Professions (with subordinate legal acts and amendments), a person who wishes to become a teacher must also fulfil criteria for practising a regulated profession and thus to perform professional practice and to take the state examination. Therefore, primary and secondary school teachers have the right to teach upon successful completion of professional internship during their induction period and passing the state exam.¹²¹

Table 6.1 Minimum qualifications required to teach in primary and secondary schools

	I cycle (or other)	II cycle (or other)	Other
Primary school teaching qualifications		Master degree	
Secondary school teaching qualifications		Master degree	

Teachers can also obtain qualifications in the course of their career. Based on their work experience and training (documented in professional portfolio) and successful passing of the examination for the respective qualification category, primary and secondary school teachers are eligible for three levels of qualification after 5, 10 and 20 years of teaching.¹²² They can be promoted to:

- 'qualified teachers' after at least 5 years of experience;
- 'specialised teachers' after at least 10 years of practice (but min. 5 years after becoming 'qualified teachers');
- 'Master teachers' after at least 20 years of experience (but minimum 10 years after becoming 'specialised teachers').¹²³

Promotion is connected to pay increases (determined by the decision of the Council of Ministers) to help differentiate teacher salaries by professional merit.¹²⁴ The criteria and procedures of qualification of teachers shall be set out by instruction of the Minister. The main criticism towards this system is that after 20 years of service there are no further incentives for teachers to increase their qualifications and competences up until their pension (i.e. for more than 10 years). Other challenges that still need to be addressed in relation to teachers' pay were discussed in Section 2.4e.

Teacher qualifications are managed and monitored by the Commission for Qualification of Teachers (composed of 5 members) and organised and administered by IDE and REDs/EOs.¹²⁵

6.2 Quality assurance mechanisms

Quality assurance is carried out at three levels: at national level by NIPE, at regional level by REDs/EOs, and at local level by educational institutions.

NIPE inspectors examine school activity through direct observations in classes, outdoor school activities, meetings with teachers, questionnaires and conversations (interviews) with teachers, reviewing official documents, and other approaches. The inspectors also monitor

¹²⁰A teacher of art can be a person who has graduated from the Academy of Arts and a teacher of physical education can be a person who has graduated from the Sport Academy (Albanian Ministry of Education and Science replies to European Commission's Questionnaire on 'Chapter 26, Education, Youth and Culture', data completed in 2010).

¹²¹The Law No 69 of 21.6.2012 on Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania.

¹²²Directive No.1 of 05.02.2013 on the Criteria and Procedures of Teacher Qualifications.

¹²³Article 59 of the Law No 69 of 21.6.2012 on Pre-university Education System.

¹²⁴European Commission's Questionnaire ...,op.cit.

¹²⁵Directive No1 of 05.02.2013 on the Criteria and Procedures of Teacher Qualifications.

the implementation of the teachers' code of ethics and can provide advice to particular teachers, if requested by teachers.¹²⁶ During school inspections, inspectors rely on the self-evaluation of the institution and of its employees.¹²⁷

The performance of teachers is evaluated by school principals and the periodical evaluation of school principals is conducted by REDs. At school level, School Directorates monitor and evaluate the quality of the teaching services provided by teachers following the Guideline for School Inspection and Teachers' Evaluation. The following instruments are used in this process: observing teaching classes (peer review), mini-tests on the achievements of pupils per class or per subject chapter, semester or annual testing, questionnaires for pupils and parents.¹²⁸ Teacher observation by a school principal throughout a year in line with a teacher development plan is considered as a somewhat unfriendly activity, stressful for all parties involved (teacher, pupils and school director).

Research findings disclose that one of the main shortcomings during monitoring and control that policy-makers (government officials, inspectors) execute over school education providers (teachers, principals) is the focus on procedural and organisational aspects rather than teaching and educational outcomes. Another challenge is the lack of effective ways to identify a low-performing school, teacher or principal (in terms of educational outcomes). In consequence, school education providers are held accountable to perform according to the legal requirements (e.g. a teacher coming to work, teaching, doing assessments, etc.), but not for the quality of their work.¹²⁹

As for more recent developments, the Code of Ethics has been approved. According to the current law, school principals should be licensed and enter examination according to a school leadership programme to become school principals for a four year mandate. This practice has not initiated yet and the leadership programme training is offered by NGO's.¹³⁰

Despite these developments, the generally low scores in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2000 and 2009 indicate a need for further investments in improving educational effectiveness and quality. The results from 2000 show that Albania was among the countries with one of the largest proportions of students below the basic reading literacy level, scoring the second lowest in literacy out of the 41 participating countries. The performance in mathematical skills was slightly better (third from last out of the 41 countries), but still significantly below the OECD average.¹³¹ In 2009, Albania was 59th (Mathematics and Science) and 60th (reading) respectively out of 65 participating countries. While comparison of results from 2000 and 2009 reveals that students' overall performance in literacy and numeracy improved, there is still a considerable gap in educational outcomes when compared to other participating countries.¹³²

7 Innovations in teacher education

The subsequent part addresses the issue of innovations in teacher education, such as inclusion of novel topics in teacher education programmes, ICT-related teaching and learning, new ways of doing old things that worked well and proved to be effective. Important strategies/reforms that prioritise the adoption of new teaching/professional development models and the development of practical

¹²⁶Information from NIPE's website, <http://ikap.edu.al/?p=132&lang=en>

¹²⁷Regulation of the National Inspectorate of the Pre-university Education, 2010.

¹²⁸European Commission's Questionnaire ...,op.cit.

¹²⁹Quality Assurance in Basic Education in South East Europe. What Works in Our Region? A study coordinated by Bucharest-based think tank Romanian Academic Society, and compiled of several National Reports (National Expert from Albania: Estevan Ikonomi).

¹³⁰ Stakeholder consultation (interview, National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education), 27.06.2013.

¹³¹OECD (2003) Literacy skills for the world of tomorrow: Further results from PISA 2000, <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/2960581.pdf>

¹³²UNICEF (2010) Education in Albania. Country Profile, <http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Albania.pdf>

ICT-related skills are also included. At the end of the section, opportunities and limitations for managing the change process in the teacher education programme are identified.

7.1 Innovative practices and developments

According to the Ministry of Education and Science, innovations and good practice in teacher training are now being introduced into the mainstream education and training system through the identification and introduction of new teaching models and practices. This can be achieved through:

- Identification of new practices and identification of innovative teachers and principals by the inspectorate and RED/EO;
- Ministry's award ceremony for the achievements of the best teachers, schools and pupils in the country;
- Presentation of the most outstanding innovative aspects and practices of teachers and schools in the reports of the local and central inspectorate, in periodical papers prepared by REDs and EOs and distributed to all the schools in their region, and in the periodical journal 'Mësuesi' ('The Teacher');
- Employing innovative individuals as agents of change, by involving them in the local training of school teachers and principals;
- Demonstration of successful teachers' experiences through 'open classes', with other teachers participating, and transfer of best practices and innovative aspects to other schools by NGOs, through projects and publications;
- Online exchange of best practices and experience and exchanges with partner institutions in the Western Balkans region and in other countries in Europe, through peer reviews and peer learning;
- Implementation of pilot projects in schools on contemporary models and methodologies, with the support of European partners.¹³³

In addition, Article 30 of the 2012 Law on Pre-university Education System tasked regional and local educational units (REDs and EOs) with rewarding the employees of educational institutions for outstanding achievements. This initiative is financed from a special fund of the annual budget and the criteria for award are determined upon the decision of the Council of Ministers. As the law is new, its implementation and impact need time to show results.

As for innovations in ITE, they include the following changes in the teacher education curriculum¹³⁴:

- A shift from former content-based courses to knowledge and research based academic courses;¹³⁵
- Introduction of a 'minor' specialisation in second cycle studies, to further improve competences of future teachers;
- Adoption of an ICT course in the first cycle studies (ITE);
- Requirement of a research thesis to obtain a degree in teacher education;
- Implementation of professional competency-based learning under the Bologna process.

It is also expected that the introduction of Research as a new subject in teacher education for elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary school teachers, in line with the new curricula, will contribute to the application of research and innovation in classrooms.¹³⁶

CPD training on the implementation of innovative practices in new areas of teacher expertise have also been supported by NGOs and international donors (see below and Section 8.3).

¹³³European Commission's Questionnaire ...,op.cit.

¹³⁴Musai, B. (2010) Formimi I Mësuesve Në Përputhje Me Kërkesat E Shoqërisë Së Dijes [Teacher education in compliance with the knowledge society needs], <http://www.lajme.gen.al/2010-07-06/formimi-i-mesuesve-ne-perputhje-me-kerkesat-e-shoqerise-se-dijes.html>

¹³⁵Stakeholder consultations (interview, teacher education provider), 19.02.2013

¹³⁶Musai (2010) Teacher education in compliance with the knowledge society needs..., op.cit.

Step By Step Centre in Albania

Step by Step Centre in Albania was created in 2002, following the implementation of the Step by Step programme of the Albanian Education Development project from the Soros Foundation that started in 1994. The Centre promotes friendly education (until grade VI) by providing support for pupils, teachers and the whole school environment.

In collaboration with the Ministry, several schools from socially disadvantaged areas in different cities have been chosen to benefit from the project's activities. Research results have shown that the overall performance of children who completed the schools supported by the project has improved significantly.

Apart from activities aimed at creating a child-friendly physical environment, the support addressed on-going development of school teachers by organising mentoring, peer-support, teacher study groups, and providing journals and newspapers in which teachers wrote about their own experiences. Sharing of experience with peers was a particularly important element, which empowered teachers by giving them the opportunity to learn from other teachers and have their say instead of relying on experts' support only. At the beginning of the project, teachers were trained by international trainers. Later on local trainers took over this role. In addition to teachers, the whole school personnel, from school administrators to cleaning staff, was also supported to understand and believe in the child-friendly school concept.

Source: Stakeholder consultations (interview, NGO), Tirana, 19.02.2013.

While the examples presented above indicate a promising shift towards innovation, it should be noted that most of them are opportunities or recent initiatives with potential rather than well-established practices. One example is an effort to adopt a new student-centred model in the education system which is still suppressed by the traditional approach to teaching and learning and expectations towards students to memorise the assigned material. Other constraints for innovation in teacher education to be appropriately addressed as an urgent priority include: little room for reflective practice and thinking in teacher training curricula and new areas of teacher expertise (e.g. inclusive education) outside the remit of current pre-service teacher education¹³⁷; limited incentives for teachers to use creativity and implement changes; no research in the area of teacher education; and lack of professional literature in Albanian with examples of advanced, innovative practices.

7.2 The use of ICT

The innovation in teachers' development for promoting a knowledge-based society is reflected in the introduction of ICT in teacher education and training. Communication, presentation techniques, and the use of information or digital technology have been included into the recent undergraduate curricula at faculties of education as two of the ten basic skills for a knowledge-based society. The training of teachers with ICT skills goes in line with a high priority given to upper secondary education pupils to acquire skills to communicate and present in the class and to other audience.¹³⁸ As stated in the draft Curriculum Framework for Pre-university Education (2012), the effective teaching and learning should rely on ICT and systematically involve students in experiments and observations.

Since 2008, the Ministry of Education and Science has been implementing the project 'Information and communication technologies in pre-university education' which was to guarantee the functional use of 2000 laptops and video-projectors in classrooms in order to increase the quality of the teaching process. This project also entails all-level teacher training on the use of IT for teaching purposes. During training sessions teachers were to acquire

¹³⁷Pantić, N. (2012) Teacher Education Reforms between Higher Education and General Education Transformations in South-Eastern Europe: Reviewing the Evidence and Scoping the Issues, CEPS Journal, Vol. 2, n. 4, University of Ljubljana.

¹³⁸Ibid.

skills that would allow them to use multimedia products for independent research and for didactic purposes, to apply them in class with pupils during team work or individual tasks.¹³⁹

Other ICT-related projects in education include: the Master Plan for the Albanian programme on e-schools (2005-2009) supported by the UNDP, and projects on development of the Education Information Management System (EIMS) run by the Ministry. The provision for ICT training for teachers was one of the components of these initiatives.

Despite its promotion by the Ministry of Education, ICT and multimedia are not being widely used in teaching and learning.¹⁴⁰ Some of the main obstacles for broader usage of ICT by school teachers identified in recent research include:

- difficulties with demonstrating the link between the usage of technology and improvements in the teaching and learning processes;¹⁴¹
- inadequate incentives for teachers to continue their development of reflective practice with ICT;¹⁴²
- the need for more trainings, adequate time and materials (e.g. research studies on ICT contribution to traditional classroom teaching) for teachers to absorb the knowledge on ICT in classroom;¹⁴³
- further changes to be implemented in pedagogy to integrate ICT and multimedia in teaching and learning.¹⁴⁴

Finally, inadequate infrastructure (e.g. insufficient number of laboratories, Internet connectivity of low bandwidth, laptops and projectors for each teacher) and low levels of direct funding, both for infrastructure and activities, still pose a problem for more efficient use of ICT at school and in teacher education. According to the recent survey on the use of ICT and multimedia in teaching and learning in Albanian schools¹⁴⁵, secondary school teachers are often not equipped with laptops, which could be used to illustrate the lesson topic with videos, audio files, animation or images. Limited number of projectors per school creates further constraints for teachers to include ICT elements when conducting lessons.¹⁴⁶

7.3 The opportunities and limitations of introducing innovations in the teacher education system

The main opportunities and limitations of introducing innovations in the teacher education system are listed in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Opportunities and limitations for introducing innovations

Opportunities	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New legal framework supporting competence-based approach, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prevalence of traditional approach to teaching and learning practice.

¹³⁹Musai, Dhamo, Muka, Rapti, (2005) National report: Albania..., op. cit.

¹⁴⁰Geography, History, Albanian Language and Literature, Biology, Physics, and Chemistry, were identified as the subjects, where ICT and multimedia are used more often (Ktona, A. and Sota, M. [2013] Issues with the use of ICTs and multimedia in teaching and learning, paper from the 1st Albania International Conference on Education (AICE) July 17, 2013 – August 17, 2013).

¹⁴¹Bushati, J., Vidacek-Hains, V., Gorishti, A., Barolli, E. (2012) Reflections on Learning and Teaching through ICT: Case Studies in Albania and Croatia, Central European Conference on Information and Intelligent Systems, Faculty of Organisation and Informatics, University of Zagreb, September 19-21, 2012.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³McCloud, R., Sula, A. (2012) Effective Computer Programming Instruction for pre-University Albanian Students, paper from the 1st Albania International Conference on Education (AICE), July 17, 2013 – August 17, 2013, <http://ecs.epoka.edu.al/index.php/aice/aice2012/paper/viewFile/810/747>

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

¹⁴⁵In total there were 735 questionnaires gathered from students from different regions who study in high schools in Tirana and at the Faculty of Natural Sciences. For more please see: Ktona, A. and Sota, M. (2013) Issues with the use of ICTs and multimedia in teaching and learning, paper from the 1st Albania International Conference on Education (AICE) July 17, 2013 – August 17, 2013.

¹⁴⁶Ktona, and Sota (2013) Issues with the use of ICTs..., op.cit.

Opportunities	Limitations
<p>and the use of research in teacher education and teaching practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Innovative concepts and support from national and international NGOs. ■ Training for teachers in communication technology skills and informatics. ■ Introduction of research subject into teacher education programmes. ■ Changes and development of technology reflected in the curriculum of pre-university education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No research in the area of teacher education and lack of professional literature in Albanian with examples of advanced, innovative practices. ■ Little room for self-reflection and thinking about innovative approaches in teacher training curricula. ■ No incentives for teachers to use creativity and implement changes. ■ Poor infrastructure.

Source: Analysis based on stakeholder consultations (interviews and questionnaire answers) and desk research.

8 Partnerships and interaction with external actors

Section 8 explores whether partnerships between schools and teacher education institutions are promoted and implemented in order to encourage schools to play an active and central role in developing teaching methods, improving the quality of teaching and extending the knowledge about teaching and learning. The role of private and non-governmental sector actors in the area of teacher education is also reflected as well as the influence of international experts.

8.1 Partnerships between schools and teacher education institutions

Article 5 of the Regulation of the Ministry on the Organisation and the Conduct of Professional Practice for Teaching as a Regulated Profession obliges HEIs offering teacher education programmes to collaborate with partners in developing guiding programmes and to ensure that students learn the best professional practice.¹⁴⁷

Yet there are no official partnerships between schools and teacher education institutions and teaching faculties do not provide services for schools.¹⁴⁸ The cooperation refers only to school or pedagogical practice of teacher students that takes place at schools (so-called 'practice schools').¹⁴⁹ Limited contacts between teacher education institutions and schools limit the effectiveness of the teaching practice.

Among other factors that contribute to this problem are: the reluctance of some university staff to visit schools, unwillingness of local educational units to collaborate with private universities, and the lack of funding or any status for schools which agree to accept trainee students.¹⁵⁰

8.2 The role of the business sector in teacher education

Business is engaged only in the vocational education sector. Cases of cooperation between teacher education and the business sector have not been identified through this study, apart from private agencies accredited to provide CPD.

8.3 The role of NGOs and external support in teacher education

Most of the in-service training is provided by third parties, usually local or international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or private institutes. They often offer expertise that educational institutions are not able to provide.

¹⁴⁷The Ministry of Education and Science, National Education Strategy 2004-2015.

¹⁴⁸Musai, Dharmo, Muka, Rapti, (2005) National report: Albania, op. cit.

¹⁴⁹Universities sign agreements with the schools for the purposes of the teaching practice.

¹⁵⁰Hatakenaka, S. and Thompson, Q. (2006) Albania Higher Education Report: Report submitted to the European Investment Bank; stakeholder consultations (interview, ITE provider), Tirana, 20.03.2013.

Albania is highly dependent on foreign aid and international organisations play an important role in shaping its education policies, setting the agenda with policy-makers and assisting teacher training in the pre-university system.¹⁵¹ Some of the key international players and their involvement are briefly discussed in Table 8.1 below. The main areas of both local and international support embrace inclusive education, development of education strategy, strengthening teacher development centres, and development of Master study programmes in education. As for continuing professional development, the main topics addressed are: human rights, gender, critical thinking, children’s protection, children with disabilities and special needs, health education, gender education, environment education, education on peace, the integration of Roma children, child labour and trafficking, including ICT in teaching, and implementation of a new curriculum etc.¹⁵² Given that many of these topics are more in line with the mandates of these organisations, there is an ongoing debate whether they deliver what Albanian society really wants and needs.¹⁵³

Table 8.1 Examples of external support for teacher education and training

Institution	Area of support provided
Council of Europe	The CoE’s Pestalozzi Programme provides a variety of training to education professionals in order to enhance their knowledge and skills in respect of the CoE’s priorities in the education field: democracy, human rights and the rule of law. ¹⁵⁴ Another example of technical assistance launched in 2009 is a Project against corruption in Albania (PACA), funded mainly from EU funds. ¹⁵⁵ Among its main objectives is ‘to contribute to the prevention of corruption in the education sector by improving transparency, accountability and social participation in the education system’. ¹⁵⁶
European Union	The EU’s Tempus Programme, started in 1992, offered training that focused on issues such as curricula, new teaching methodologies, and the application of advanced techniques in laboratory works. ¹⁵⁷ For instance, joint projects of the EU, Albanian universities and other Western Balkan universities aimed at establishing a new status for teachers and specialists of educational sciences, contributed to further development of professionalism in education in providing a concrete basis for the re-planning of initial teacher training programmes, and the creation of conditions for involving students and trainees in educational research. ¹⁵⁸ As for the IPA support in recent years, it focused mainly on raising the level and quality of general education, particularly among vulnerable groups (e.g. Roma community).
Save the Children Albania	SCiA is active in modelling and promoting inclusive education interventions with local NGO and DPO partners. As part of its agenda, SCiA supported in-service training of about 9 100 teachers in 400 schools throughout the country (in 2008 alone ¹⁵⁹). The training was directed at improving teaching and classroom management skills through topics such as student-centred methodologies, IEPs for students with special educational needs, and Roma children. ¹⁶⁰
UNICEF Albania	UNICEF Albania initially focused on increasing teacher skills on inclusion (2001–2003) and is now more involved in supporting new teaching and learning strategies such as interactive and student-centred methodologies to prevent student

¹⁵¹Ikonomi, Musai, Sotirofski (2010) Mapping policies and practices..., op. cit.

¹⁵²European Commission’s Questionnaire ...,op.cit.

¹⁵³<http://www.bti-project.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/reports/2012/pdf/BTI%202012%20Albania.pdf>

¹⁵⁴www.coe.int/pestalozzi

¹⁵⁵Albania dropped from 95th position out of 176 countries in 2011 to 113th position in 2012 in the Corruption Perception Index (<http://www.transparency.org/country#ALB>).

¹⁵⁶http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation/economiccrime/corruption/projects/Albania/PACA_en.asp

¹⁵⁷European Commission’s Questionnaire ...,op.cit.

¹⁵⁸Project development of ‘Master Study Programmes in Education’, 44677-TEMPUS-1-2008-1-IT-TEMPUS-JPCR.

¹⁵⁹Save the Children, Albania Programme 2009 Annual Plan.

¹⁶⁰Ikonomi, Musai, Sotirofski (2010) Mapping policies and practices, op. cit.

Institution	Area of support provided
	marginalisation and dropout. A total of 200 teachers have been trained on these strategies. ¹⁶¹
World Bank	The WB provided assistance to the development of the National Education Strategy 2004 – 2015 through the Education Excellence and Equity Project (2006-2013) and the Education Reform Project (2000-2004). In line with these documents, teacher training and development should enable implementation of curriculum reform. Therefore, new structures and capacities have been established at central level for curriculum, teacher training and education assessments, as a part of these projects. ¹⁶² Accordingly, 12 509 teachers (43% of all primary and general secondary teachers) have been trained under the project between 2007 and 2011. Training was also provided to all school principals in management and education leadership skills, and over 90% of primary and secondary schools have functioning boards. ¹⁶³

Other organisations active in the Albanian education sector include inter alia: UNESCO, IOM, World Vision Albania, UNDP, Soros Foundation, Swiss AlbVET and the German GTZ.

The provision of in-service training has been depicted as 'largely and disproportionately delivered by NGOs' and 'lacking cohesion and coordination'.¹⁶⁴ There have been some attempts to coordinate their actions with the Ministry, but this collaboration has not been substantial. Although since 2012 teacher professional development can be out-sourced to accredited non-governmental service providers, in the case of NGOs such activity has been sporadic. Most of the training courses that have been provided by NGOs are not recognised, and some major players in the sector have been unsuccessfully lobbying for introducing the credit system in the in-service teacher training system. Thus, whereas the state authorities recognise the input of NGOs to fill-in in the gaps in areas where specific expertise is needed, they do not associate it with the credit system.¹⁶⁵

9 Key strengths, challenges and perspectives

This final section summarises the key strengths, weaknesses and challenges faced by the national authorities and educational institutions in the area of teacher education. This is followed by considerations regarding the need for further policy action within the country reviewed as well as at Western Balkan and EU level.

9.1 Current strengths and weaknesses of teacher education

Table 9.1 Summary table: Strengths and weaknesses of primary and secondary school teacher education

Strengths	Weaknesses
ITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Modernised curricula focused on pedagogical and methodological aspects, key skills, ICT, English, research and teaching practice in ■ Wide gap between theoretical knowledge and subject-based school practice. ■ Lack of emphasis on inclusive education and special education needs in ITE

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2005/06/15/000160016_20050615164242/Rendered/PDF/31861.pdf

¹⁶³http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/ECA/2012/06/10/BA03672B96DDFA1785257A19005B20D0/1_0/Rendered/PDF/ISR0Disclosabl010201201339346121740.pdf

¹⁶⁴Ikonomi, Musai, Sotirofski (2010) Mapping policies and practices..., op. cit.

¹⁶⁵<http://www.bti-project.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/reports/2012/pdf/BTI%202012%20Albania.pdf>

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p data-bbox="512 271 600 293">schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="464 300 903 356">■ Introduction of a three-cycle system in line with the Bologna process. <li data-bbox="464 360 903 416">■ Introduction of Research as a new subject in initial teacher education. <li data-bbox="464 421 903 477">■ Introduction of ICT to initial teacher education. 	<p data-bbox="967 271 1150 293">training curricula.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="919 300 1415 356">■ Out-dated models of school practice, unchanged for many years. <li data-bbox="919 360 1415 416">■ Underdeveloped mentoring system during school practice. <li data-bbox="919 421 1415 477">■ Challenging implementation of the student-orientated approach in ITE. <li data-bbox="919 481 1415 560">■ Uncontrolled enlargement of teaching faculties without stringent quality criteria applied to selection of students. <li data-bbox="919 564 1415 620">■ Poor performance of students admitted to teacher education programmes. <li data-bbox="919 624 1415 680">■ Lack of labour market analysis to guide the recruitment processes in ITE. <li data-bbox="919 685 1415 707">■ Cases of corruption reported in ITE.
<p data-bbox="312 725 352 748">CPD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="464 725 903 837">■ Institutionalisation of CPD by developing a scheme for teacher professional qualification levels associated with a salary increase. <li data-bbox="464 842 903 898">■ Introduction of compulsory in-service teacher training. <li data-bbox="464 902 903 1014">■ Out-sourcing CPD to external service providers and a transition from a supply-based to a demand-based system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="919 725 1415 781">■ Insufficient length and limited areas/fields of obligatory CPD for teachers. <li data-bbox="919 786 1415 842">■ Unequal access to quality in-service training (e.g. no financial resources). <li data-bbox="919 846 1415 902">■ Insufficient budget for teacher training to meet the needs in this area. <li data-bbox="919 907 1415 963">■ No recognition of teachers' achievements outside the compulsory training. <li data-bbox="919 967 1415 1046">■ No further incentives for teachers to increase their qualifications and competences after 20 years of service. <li data-bbox="919 1050 1415 1106">■ Cases of corruption reported in in-service teacher education.
<p data-bbox="312 1124 424 1180">Probation/ Induction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="464 1124 903 1180">■ Introduction of an induction year for novice teachers. <li data-bbox="464 1184 903 1236">■ Specific responsibilities assigned to teacher mentors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="919 1124 1415 1180">■ No salary for novice teachers undergoing induction. <li data-bbox="919 1184 1415 1270">■ Idea of mentorship not supported and mentor's position not considered as a step forward on the teacher career scale.
<p data-bbox="312 1285 440 1341">QA and evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="464 1285 903 1397">■ Introduction of a Code of Ethics and new legislation on licencing, examination and mandates of school principals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="919 1285 1415 1364">■ Insufficient quality assurance/evaluation mechanisms. Existing measures focus on legal requirements instead of quality. <li data-bbox="919 1368 1415 1424">■ Lack of indicators to identify weaknesses or poorly performing teachers or schools. <li data-bbox="919 1429 1415 1485">■ Lack of harmonised indicators for teachers' assessment at regional level. <li data-bbox="919 1489 1415 1554">■ Lack of criteria to assess institutions, school principals and teachers.
<p data-bbox="312 1572 424 1628">Legislation and policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="464 1572 903 1650">■ On-going reform of pre-university education, higher education and teacher professional development. <li data-bbox="464 1655 903 1767">■ Well-developed legal and policy framework in the field of pre-university education, teacher education and training. <li data-bbox="464 1771 903 1827">■ Development of a new model of teacher education. <li data-bbox="464 1832 903 1888">■ On-going modernisation process of curricula for teacher education. <li data-bbox="464 1892 903 1948">■ Introduction of open competitions in teacher recruitment procedures. <li data-bbox="464 1953 903 2009">■ Wide programme of teacher training in ICT. <li data-bbox="464 2013 903 2065">■ Most reforms legally grounded in the Pre-university Law (2012). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="919 1572 1415 1706">■ Lack of coherence between the legal framework underpinning the reforms and the actual implementation, partly due to the lack of effective communication with teachers. <li data-bbox="919 1711 1415 1856">■ Weak links between the reforms in the education system and initial and continuing teacher training (inadequate preparation of teachers to support the curriculum reform in general education). <li data-bbox="919 1861 1415 1973">■ Insufficient needs assessment and evidence underpinning reform plans, not supported by appropriate research to guide reform processes. <li data-bbox="919 1977 1415 2033">■ Teacher education standards not yet approved. <li data-bbox="919 2038 1415 2087">■ Limited incentives for teachers to be innovative and implement changes.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establishing new bodies (IDE, NIPE, NAE, NCPE) to support the implementation of educational reforms. ■ Shifting more competencies to local government units in managing the education sector. 	
<p>Cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Developing new structures to increase the participation of the community in school life. ■ In-service training provision by local and international NGOs and institutions, particularly on inclusion-specific knowledge and skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of cohesion and coordination in the provision of CPD by NGOs. ■ Insufficient collaboration and unregulated relations between institutions providing teacher education, schools and other actors (e.g. business, community, NGOs). ■ Low HEIs involvement (and capacity) in the induction and in-service training.
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support from international donors. ■ An increase in teacher salaries in public schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of professional literature for teachers to learn about advancements in teacher education. ■ Poor university and school infrastructure.
<p>Attitudes / Perceptions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Deteriorating social status of teachers.

Source: Analysis based on stakeholder consultations (interviews and questionnaire answers) and desk research.

9.2 The need for further policy action

- Policy areas where further policy action at *the national level* is required:
 - Developing a strategy for teacher education that combines the following components: 1) reform of university-based ITE (stressing school practice); 2) further development of the induction procedure; 3) further incentives for CPD after receiving a formal qualification (recognition of achievements other than participation in accredited training).
 - Developing a concept of school-centred training and professional development of staff, with ‘practice schools’ acting as hubs of excellence in training for new teachers. Such centres could provide models for improving the quality of teacher training, encouraging the implementation of innovations in the field of education, allowing teaching theory to be practised as a part of teacher education programmes and support teacher training providers in the lifelong learning sector.
 - Providing incentives for public universities to apply additional admission criteria to avoid uncontrolled enlargement of education faculties (e.g. by providing more incentives to enrolments in other faculties) and directing the trend instead of leaving it open to the free market. The enrolment of students in teaching faculties should be proportionate to the need for teachers, identified through up-to-date research data; over-production of under-qualified graduates should be avoided.
 - Developing a mentoring system for school practice, incentives for the best teachers to become mentors, as well as clear common rules or standards guiding this area of teacher education (e.g. peer-mentoring groups, open classrooms, teacher study groups, professional journals by teachers for teachers).
 - Developing and regulating partnership programmes for the teacher education and teacher training sector to encourage cooperation of universities and other training providers with schools and other actors.

- Thorough needs assessment when preparing the list of teacher training needs that gives priority to topics supporting the reform (e.g. courses on training in student-centred teaching methods, inclusive education).
 - Designing teacher standards in line with and in view of changing demands of the curriculum (e.g. the integrated curriculum).
 - Support for the decentralisation of CPD in order to better respond to regional, local, and school needs in annual plans for teacher education.
 - Developing and introducing incentive schemes for teachers, based on their performance (merit-based pay) rather than on the length of service, and other initiatives directed at increasing the prestige of the teaching profession.
 - Development of a stronger conceptual model for teacher education curricula with emphasis on: innovative teaching methods; cross-curricular competences; competences on integrated approaches to teaching and learning; issues of social inclusion, social cohesion and children with special needs, to create equal opportunities for all vulnerable groups.
 - Introducing alternative modes of delivering CPD training to ensure its quality and efficiency (e.g. intensive block training, distance learning, or a combination of both).
 - Providing incentives and support for teachers to efficiently use information and communication technologies to improve their teaching and learning processes.
 - Implementing initiatives and policies to combat corruption in the field of education.
- Policy areas where cooperation at the *Western Balkans level* would be beneficial:
 - Cooperation between universities offering teacher education programmes to increase the mobility and cooperation between teachers in the region.
 - Establishing a regional teacher association or network to cooperate in various aspects (e.g. research, partnerships) and tackle many common problems related to the teaching profession in the region.
 - Policy areas where *EU cooperation* may be useful/sought:
 - Providing further expertise on teacher education in areas such as establishing partnerships between teacher education providers and schools, effective school practice and induction, developing the concept of learning outcomes and curriculum-based competences.
 - Facilitating the process of mobility grant applications for universities and teachers, which is currently considered as being difficult to follow and thus discouraging potential applicants from participation in mobility programmes.
 - Tackling the isolation of Albanian schools and universities by encouraging integration of teachers, schools, and education departments through cooperation with other countries (e.g. through twinning projects), especially in the region.
 - Support for creating a resource-base for teacher education (e.g. online libraries, platforms, databases).
 - Support for the development of professional associations of teacher educators in the region, promoting EU best practices in the area of teacher education.

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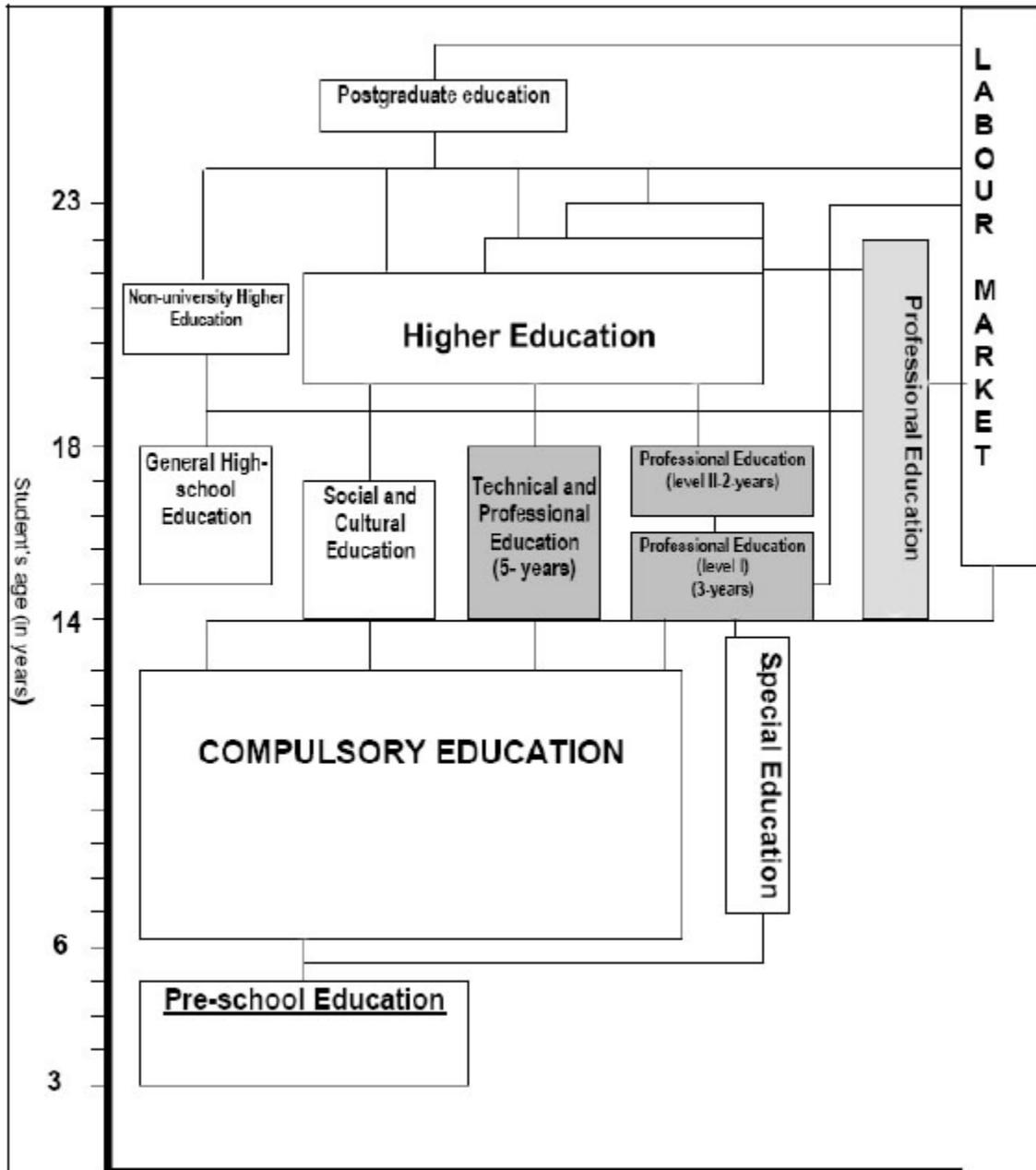
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Trade Union Federation of Education and Science of Albania

University of Tirana

Annex 1 Structure of education system in Albania



Source: Musai, B., Dharmo, M., Muka, P., & Rapti, E. (2005) *The Prospects of Teacher Education in South East Europe* (pp. 95-133). In "The prospects of teacher education in South East Europe". South East European Educational Co-operation Network, Ljubljana, Centre for Education Policy Studies, http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/workshop/tesee/dokumenti/book/Albania.pdf

Annex 2 The role and responsibilities of a mentor

In line with Article 11 of the Decision No. 336 of 14.07.2011 on the Organisation of Professional Practices for the Regulated Teacher's Profession, the role of a mentor is to help the teacher-trainee to successfully perform the professional practice through:

- Development of the teacher-trainee's skills through consultations, recommendations, comments and various activities;
- Creating opportunities for the practicing teacher to implement modern, interactive teaching methods;
- Using various tools for practicing teacher development such as participation in working groups, short-term training, personal career counselling etc.;
- Assigning challenging tasks to a teacher-student to expand his or her professional knowledge;
- Supervising the trainee's performance by instruments specified in the appropriate regulation;
- Providing the trainee with the information needed on the national education system;
- Motivating the trainee to achieve target levels of performance.

In so doing, as further specified in Article 13, a mentor is responsible for:

- Familiarising the trainee with relevant regulations and the format of trainee assessment; developing a monthly plan of observation hours for the trainee and hours when he or she acts as assistant teacher;
- Holding the mentor's schedule describing mentor's work during observation hours and marking the main findings and advice of counselling sessions;
- Completing assessment of practitioner for every observation hour;
- Helping the practitioner to prepare the portfolio to submit by the end of the practice;
- Preparing the evaluation report at the end of the practice.

Source: Decision No 336 of 14.07.2011 on the Organisation of Professional Practices for the Regulated Teacher's Profession.



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