

Lehrkräftebildung im europäischen Kontext



The teaching profession is the backbone of any education system, with teachers and school leaders playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of a nation. However, the attractiveness of this profession in Europe faces significant challenges due to the erosion of teachers' salaries. This paper critically examines the findings from the European Commission/ EACEA/Eurydice report (2023) on teachers' salaries in Europe and delves into the impact of these trends on the attractiveness of the teaching profession. It highlights the disparities in salaries, the limited potential for salary growth, and the consequences of these issues on education quality, economic development, and societal perceptions. The paper also discusses the role of policy, advocacy, and international collaboration in addressing these challenges and proposes comprehensive strategies to revalorize the teaching profession in Europe.

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The Erosion of Teachers' Salaries and its Impact on the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession in Europe

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Introduction

The teaching profession is the cornerstone of a nation's educational system, shaping the future of society by nurturing its youth. However, the European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice's latest report (2023) titled "Teachers' and school heads' salaries and allowances in Europe 2021/2022" reveals a stark reality – a profession at the crossroads. This critical paper delves into the findings of the report and examines the significant differences in teachers' salaries across European countries and the potential consequences for the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

This paper aims to critically analyze the main findings from the European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice report (2023) on teachers' and school heads' salaries and allowances in Europe 2021/2022 and examine the broader implications of declining salaries on the appeal of the teaching profession. The paper focuses on the disparities in teachers' salaries across European countries, the limited potential for salary growth, and the repercussions on the quality of education, the economy, and the perception of teaching as a profession. Additionally, the role of policy, advocacy, and international collaboration in addressing these challenges and proposed comprehensive strategies to revalorize the teaching profession in Europe are addressed.

Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession – Definition and Metrics

The attractiveness of the teaching profession in Europe is a complex issue with far-reaching consequences for education quality, societal well-being, and economic development.

Available research reports tend to focus on analyzing factors that influence the attractiveness of the teaching profession and policy measures to improve this attractiveness, rather than defining the concept itself or delving into the essence of the phenomenon. For the purpose of the paper, I propose to define the discussed concept as follows: "the attractiveness of the teaching profession refers to a set of characteristics that distin-

guish this profession from others, highlight its specificity, and make it competitive in the job market. The strength of the attractiveness of the teaching profession is indicated by (i) the attraction of individuals with the required knowledge and skills who are simultaneously sought after in other professions, and (ii) the encouragement, particularly of highly qualified and talented teachers, to remain in the profession” (Madalińska-Michalak 2021, 260). This definition demonstrates that if the teaching profession is considered as attractive, it has the power to draw individuals with high potential and retain the most qualified teachers with various competencies. This power to attract and retain teachers originates from the uniqueness of the profession and the conditions of employment and work offered within it.

In the report titled "Study on Policy Measures to Improve the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession in Europe" (Carlo et al. 2013, 13), it is shown that at least two metrics can be used for researching the attractiveness of the teaching profession. One of them is the ratio of the number of applicants to the number of available teaching positions. The other metric is the number of teachers leaving their profession to pursue other jobs. The authors of the report appropriately emphasize that drawing far-reaching conclusions solely based on these metrics can be misleading, as the perceived attractiveness may also depend on a complex interplay of various factors, including economic growth rates and the state of the job market.

In reality, surveys remain the primary source of information in studies addressing the attractiveness of the profession. These surveys, along with opinions gathered from various groups, including teachers themselves, about their attitude toward the teaching profession and its evolution, prove crucial. Such research can help determine to what extent learners, especially those with the highest achievements, intend to become teachers. An intriguing aspect in this context pertains to the attitudes of parents and students toward the teaching profession. For instance, the answers parents provide regarding whether they would want their child to become a teacher, or whether they would encourage their child to become a teacher if they had the chance to become a lawyer, doctor, or engineer, might provide insight. The value attributed to school education and to teachers likely influences parental opinions regarding their children’s career paths. An important question arises about how much highly capable students consider a career in teaching.

The Teaching Profession – Challenges of today and tomorrow

Research reports focused on the teaching profession in Europe highlight a range of challenges that educational policymakers should consider in order to strengthen the teaching profession (see: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2018; Carlo et al. 2013; Madalińska-Michalak 2021). Within this group of challenges, the issue of the attractiveness of the teaching profession takes a central role. Conclusions drawn from these reports direct our attention toward issues such as:

1. Social perception of the teaching profession.
2. Intensification of teacher workload.
3. Limited opportunities for professional career development.
4. Imbalance in the representation of women and men in the profession – a feminized profession.
5. Aging teacher population.
6. Teacher shortages, oversupply, and uneven distribution of teachers, especially in terms of subjects they teach.
7. Teacher attrition.
8. Lack of students in teacher education programs, including promising candidates for teaching positions.
9. Difficulties in retaining students in pedagogical programs and simultaneously encouraging them to pursue teaching careers, particularly among the most talented pedagogical graduates (see: Madalińska-Michalak 2021, 261).

The last two of the listed issues demonstrate that the teaching profession is losing a significant portion of its power to attract the most promising teaching candidates. The identified challenges of the teaching profession are linked to a decline in its prestige, which in turn originates from deteriorating working conditions for teachers, relatively low teacher salaries compared to other intellectual professions, the qualifications and competencies of those entering the profession (low teacher quality), and a low level of autonomy and self-regulation within the teaching profession (see: Hargreaves 2009).

Below, due to the character limit of the paper, I will briefly discuss the first three key challenges that the teaching profession currently faces. The attention will be paid to the issues of social perception of the profession, intensification of teacher workload, and limited opportunities for professional career development.

Social Perception of the Profession

Research frequently highlights the unequal perception of the teaching profession by both the general public and teachers themselves. The results of the International Teaching and Learning International Survey, TALIS, revealed significant differences among countries in terms of teachers' opinions about their profession. In countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Finland, Mexico, Australia, and Israel, the majority of teachers felt that their profession was valued by society. In contrast, only 1 in 20 teachers in France and Slovakia believed their profession had societal recognition. In countries like Sweden, Spain, Croatia, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Italy, Brazil, Estonia, and Poland, teachers believed that their profession lacked social esteem (see: OECD 2014). In the case of Poland, the situation is quite unique. There is a noticeable discrepancy between how the teaching profession is perceived by society and how teachers themselves perceive their own profession. Despite media complaints, public opinion polls consistently rank the teaching profession highly among professions that Polish society holds in esteem. The changing dynamics of how various professions are esteemed indicate that, starting from 1975, the teaching

profession has gained slightly more prestige compared to survey results from the late 1990s and the early decades of the 21st century. The largest increase in prestige was noted in 2019, though it still remains slightly lower than, for example, in 1987. The teaching profession consistently ranks behind professions such as firefighter, miner, nurse, university professor, skilled laborer, doctor, farmer, engineer, and ahead of professions like IT specialist, officer, accountant, lawyer, entrepreneur, judge, musician, priest, minister, or council member (CBOS 2019).

Looking at the societal standing of teaching profession, one might argue that there isn't much reason for complaints. Additionally, representatives from most socio-professional groups tend to have positive opinions about the teaching profession. Society recognizes that teaching is a challenging, stressful, and highly responsible job. While responses regarding the societal image of the profession vary somewhat, they generally demonstrate that the teaching profession is esteemed. Participants in the surveys believe that teachers possess high qualifications, are eager to enhance their skills, and have a strong sense of mission. However, teacher salaries have not always reflected the societal recognition of teachers' roles (see: OECD 2015).

Indeed, the level of teacher salaries constitutes a pivotal factor impacting the attractiveness of engagement in this vocation. Nonetheless, research distinctly indicates that remuneration is not the sole determiner of the attractiveness of the teaching profession. The motivations underlying the choice to become a teacher are significantly more intricate and encompass multifaceted dimensions. While teacher salaries can shape perception of the profession's allure, other elements such as sense of mission, societal impact, working conditions, social prestige, well-being wield considerable influence as well (Alvariñas-Villaverde et al. 2022; Onyefulu, Madalinska-Michalak, & Bavl 2023).

Intensification of teacher workload

A distinctive threat to the autonomy of teachers is the intensification of their work. As noted by Michael Apple in the late 1980s, when analyzing the situation of teachers within the context of the new reality of market-oriented liberalism, a seemingly neutral discourse on efficiency has emerged (Apple 1986). This discourse, reflected in the proliferation of methods for measuring student achievements, accreditation processes, quality control mechanisms, carries a plethora of adverse consequences for teachers. Teachers find themselves with diminishing influence over what and how they teach in the classroom. Consequently, they become increasingly dependent on external factors, often subjected to predefined standards and curricula without their input. Resultantly, teachers subjected to excessive external oversight, performance evaluations, and burdened with administrative tasks, particularly bureaucratic responsibilities, become acquiescent to limitations on their roles. They become "executors" of mandates rather than architects of their own plans, exerting less effort in seeking answers to questions regarding their actions and their purpose. Apple elucidates that the imposition of external regulatory frameworks on schools can be overwhelming, depleting energy and stifling teachers' innovative potential. The work conditions of teachers, the heightened

levels of control to which they are subjected, influence the erosion of their autonomy. Apple (1986) introduces the concept of "intensification" to characterize the ramifications of this phenomenon, specifically highlighting its impact on the significance and quality of teachers' work.

An alarming observation made by Apple, along with Susan Jungck (1990), is that teachers appear to accept the entirety of the situation surrounding the process of intensification. This includes work overload due to mounting external demands, longer working hours, increased obligations, the utilization of technical criteria and tests for assessing student work, diminished breaks during the workday, decreasing opportunities for creative work, and insufficient time for professional development. These adjustments are perceived as enhancing their professionalism.

Apple underscores that the teacher's work can no longer be perceived holistically but rather as a series of disjointed tasks. Teachers are seemingly compelled to possess technical and administrative skills. They are obliged to adhere to new rules characterized by competition and school accountability for educational outcomes. Hence, the guise of professionalism attributed to this intensification engenders and fortifies features of "proletarianization," thereby catalyzing de-professionalization. It is difficult not to agree to some extent with Apple's depiction of the changes occurring in teachers' working conditions over 30 years ago, which impact their professionalism. Moreover, similar diagnoses can be found in numerous other publications dedicated to the influence of educational reforms on the lives and work of teachers.

However, external conditions, while significant, do not solely determine a teacher's work. Above all, the influence of external factors on teachers' perceptions of the significance of their work should not be perceived linearly. The proposition that teacher professionalism is solely constructed in response to educational policy requirements is debatable. Teachers approach the processes of work intensification in various ways, implying that these processes do not exert the same impact on all teachers. Furthermore, contrary to prevailing opinions, this influence is not entirely negative and inhibitory to teachers' work, as it may initially appear. The argumentation provided by Christopher Day in 1999 is still valid. Day argued that what may be an outright assault on a teacher's autonomy and professionalism for some is a change of the very nature of the profession for others. This paradox emanates from competing and frequently disputed definitions of what it means to be a professional. Changes in working conditions (resulting from legislative amendments and increased bureaucratic responsibility, coupled with decentralized decision-making processes), changes in the nature of the work (such as the development of more systematic student assessment, setting teaching goals, and imposing curricula), and their consequences for teachers (including extended working hours) are not particularly controversial.

Many teachers, far from being passive "victims" of reforms, are reaffirming their autonomy to adapt to new tasks expected of them. Simultaneously, they strive to transcend limitations imposed by new definitions of their vocational roles. Thus, teachers

are not solely reactive to changes but exercise freedom that allows them to make decisions on how to respond to these changes. Personal ideologies and beliefs about teaching guide personalized responses to navigating specific work situations and why this is the most appropriate approach. The changes that teachers must confront introduce a new dimension to their work. Opposing teachers to their external context (political, social, economic) within which they operate is a methodological error. Teachers can develop various coping strategies for deteriorating work conditions, act creatively, and proactively. Despite the growing external control system, significant professional freedom remains. While in many areas the choices available to teachers are more restricted, they can still make decisions in the classroom "based on their judgment of what is best for the student."

Limited Career Development Opportunities

The contemporary understanding of a career cannot be reduced to the selection and execution of a profession. In the present context, a career is perceived in a broader sense. This implies that a career, as a subjective phenomenon, encompasses both objective and subjective elements. Objective career components encompass the positions held by individuals, specific competencies possessed by them, professional duties they must fulfill, along with the associated activities and vocational decisions they make. Thus, a career is a sequence of positions connected with employment, roles, and experiences that an individual accumulates throughout their life. Subjective elements involve the interpretation of work-related events, such as aspirations, expectations, values, needs, job satisfaction, and feelings regarding professional experiences.

In this context, a career signifies an ongoing process of learning, resulting in the accumulation of career capital (assessed based on objective attractiveness and market demand criteria). The career development process, spanning from school to the labor market, is a lifelong endeavor. It entails transitioning from a student to an employee status, combining learning and work, traversing educational levels, connecting with the labor market, and acquiring experiences linked to activities not directly tied to work or learning but ultimately contributing to vocational maturity. Consequently, the contemporary interpretation of the term "career" highlights its processual nature. A career encompasses the life-long development of attitudes, values, skills, abilities, interests, personality traits, and knowledge. Such an understanding also signifies a structural attribute of the profession or organization. In the case of a teacher's career, this would denote a sequence of positions occupied by a typical or ideal representative practicing the profession. It includes positions that an individual can sequentially attain, starting from a pedagogy student to an intern, from a junior member of the school faculty to a senior one, and so forth. A career can also be viewed as a mobility path within a single organization, and it can be connected with the international mobility (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2021).

Research points to interrelated challenges that educational systems pose to teachers and school leaders concerning their professional careers (European Commission/

EACEA/Eurydice 2021). In Europe, significant teacher shortages are noted, and the professional careers of teachers in half of European countries remain one-level or one-dimensional. In some European nations, a multi-level/hierarchical career structure with two or more levels exists. An overarching view of the teacher's career in Europe reveals limited career development opportunities, such as vertical or horizontal professional advancement. The origins of this phenomenon are attributed to a narrow understanding of the teacher's profession, confining their role to the classroom context. This presents a substantial challenge for both schools and education systems in Europe.

Concern for novice teachers struggling to fulfill all the expected professional responsibilities has led to the development and implementation of inclusion programs, as seen in Poland's case, where novice teachers initially work as interns and subsequently as contracted teachers. Although these inclusion programs aim to assist teachers in developing the competencies necessary to become proficient and effective, the question remains as to how teachers continue to develop beyond the initial phase over the 40-year professional career that lies ahead. Policy proposals within the European Union highlight the need to reinforce teachers, schools, and educational systems by investing in continuous teacher professional development.

Teachers who engage in continuous professional development after completing their studies sometimes lament their limited capacity to fully leverage their abilities and skills, such as conducting educational research, linking practice with educational theories, or exercising leadership in their schools. This is because their role and responsibilities are confined exclusively to their work in the classroom. As a result, the teaching profession becomes less appealing to highly motivated and highly qualified individuals. It is not uncommon for these individuals to exit the profession when they perceive a lack of developmental possibilities associated with broadening their scope of responsibility. The call for teacher professional improvement remains disconnected from teachers' promotion opportunities and professional mobility.

The Erosion of Teachers' Salaries – main findings of The European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice on teachers' and school heads' salaries

The European Commission, in collaboration with the Education, Audiovisual, and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and Eurydice, has conducted an extensive examination of this issue, revealing noteworthy findings that warrant close attention. This section provides a comprehensive overview of the main findings from their report, offering a critical analysis of the stark income disparities that exist among educators within the European landscape.

The report underscores the remarkable divergence in statutory starting salaries for teachers, ranging from approximately PPS 11,000 to PPS 59,000 per annum. This con-

spicuous income inequality among teachers elicits valid concerns regarding the principles of fairness and equity inherent in the teaching profession. It challenges the foundational belief that teachers, irrespective of their geographical location, should be entitled to a salary that is both equitable and competitive. Moreover, this income disparity carries the potential to dissuade exceptionally talented individuals from embarking upon teaching careers, thereby contributing to the exacerbation of teacher shortages and potentially compromising the overall quality of education across Europe.

In light of these significant implications, the fundamental imperative to address and rectify these disparities remains a pivotal agenda for educational policymakers and stakeholders alike. This section elucidates the critical findings of the report and underscores the profound ramifications they hold for the teaching profession and the broader realm of education within Europe.

Salary Differences Across Education Levels

In addition to disparities in starting salaries, the report highlights variations in salaries across education levels. Pre-primary teachers tend to earn less, while upper secondary teachers generally earn more. These discrepancies are often linked to differences in minimum qualification requirements, but in some countries, all beginning teachers receive the same statutory salary, regardless of the education level they teach. Such variations in compensation can undermine the motivation and aspirations of teachers, impacting recruitment and retention efforts.

Limited Potential for Salary Growth

The potential for statutory salaries to increase over a teacher's career span varies considerably across European countries. Starting salaries can increase anywhere from 14% (Albania) to 143% (Cyprus) during a teacher's career. The average number of years required to reach the top of the salary range varies from 12 years (Denmark and the Netherlands) to a staggering 42 years (Hungary). These disparities in salary growth trajectories can demotivate teachers and hinder their long-term commitment to the profession.

Decreasing Salaries in Some Countries

Another alarming trend identified in the report is the decrease in annual starting salaries for teachers, adjusted for inflation, in nine countries between 2014/2015 and 2021/2022. This decline in real wages affects not only the financial stability of teachers but also the perceived value of their critical role in society. Decreasing salaries can lead to disillusionment and attrition among teachers, exacerbating recruitment and retention challenges.

GDP per Capita Discrepancies

The report establishes a strong correlation between teachers' average actual salary levels and a country's GDP per capita. While it's expected that higher GDP per capita nations offer higher salaries, it is deeply concerning that in some European countries,

teacher salaries fall below the GDP per capita at all educational levels. This discrepancy raises questions about the commitment of these nations to education and its role in economic development. It can also deter potential candidates from considering teaching as a viable career option.

School Heads' Salary Disparities

The report's findings extend to school heads, where minimum statutory salaries in some countries are lower than the salaries of teachers with 15 years of experience. This disparity in compensation for leadership roles may discourage talented teachers from pursuing administrative positions, undermining the quality of school leadership.

The Erosion of Prestige and The Implications for Quality Education

Beyond the financial aspect, the erosion of prestige associated with the teaching profession is a pressing concern. As salaries stagnate or decline in certain countries, the societal perception of teaching as a respected and valued profession can diminish. This loss of prestige can deter top talent from considering teaching as a viable career option, leading to a shortage of highly qualified teachers. The state of teachers' salaries directly impacts the quality of education. In countries where salaries are low, attracting and retaining talented individuals becomes increasingly challenging. Consequently, students in these regions may have less access to high-quality teachers, which can perpetuate educational disparities and hinder social mobility.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

The discrepancies in teachers' salaries across Europe pose significant recruitment and retention challenges. It becomes challenging to attract new teachers to regions where salaries are relatively low or declining. Simultaneously, experienced teachers may opt to leave the profession or move to countries offering more competitive compensation packages. These trends can lead to a constant flux of inexperienced teachers, impacting the continuity and stability of educational institutions.

Economic Impact

The attractiveness of the teaching profession is not only a matter of education but also has economic implications. A robust education system is vital for a country's economic growth and competitiveness. A decline in the quality of education resulting from teacher recruitment and retention issues can hinder a nation's ability to produce a skilled and innovative workforce, ultimately affecting its economic prospects.

The Role of Policy, Advocacy, Public Awareness, and International Collaboration

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, with policymakers playing a central role. Governments should consider policies that ensure equitable and competitive salaries for teachers across all levels and regions. This involves not only raising starting salaries but also providing opportunities for career progression and salary growth. Additionally, policy measures must focus on restoring the prestige and re-

spect associated with the teaching profession to attract and retain top talent. The teaching profession's challenges should be brought to the forefront of public discourse. Advocacy efforts, including those by teachers' unions and education stakeholders, can raise awareness of the importance of fair and competitive compensation for teachers. Public support for these issues is critical in influencing policymakers to prioritize education funding and teacher salaries.

Given the interconnected nature of the globalized world, international collaboration is crucial. Countries can learn from each other's best practices in teacher compensation and education policies. Initiatives like the European Commission's efforts to track and compare teachers' salaries are essential steps toward fostering collaboration and sharing knowledge.

Discussion

The erosion of teachers' salaries and its consequential impact on the attractiveness of the teaching profession in Europe represents a multifaceted and intricate issue encompassing economic, social, and educational dimensions. An understanding of this relationship is pivotal in comprehending the formidable challenges confronting the European education sector and its capacity to both allure and retain high-quality teachers (Madalinska-Michalak et al. 2022).

In the examination of this intricate relationship between the erosion of teachers' salaries and the desirability of the teaching profession in Europe, it is pertinent to explore several dimensions where the manifestation of this relationship is prominently evident. These dimensions can include economic determinants, quality of life aspects, educational outcomes, shortages in teaching personnel, policy and systemic implications, and perceptions concerning the teaching vocation (Madalinska-Michalak 2021).

Economic Determinants

- *Purchasing power*: In light of teachers' salaries failing to keep pace with the inexorable rise in living costs, it is reasonable to posit that their purchasing power experiences a commensurate diminishment. This, in turn, may engender financial constraints, thus diminishing the allure of the teaching profession vis-à-vis other career alternatives boasting superior compensation prospects.
- *Income disparities*: The pervasive erosion of teachers' earnings likely perpetuates and exacerbates extant income disparities. This deepening economic divide may impede individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds from considering teaching as a viable career option, further diminishing the attractiveness of the profession.
- *Competitive context*: As remuneration packages in alternative vocations, such as STEM disciplines and the financial sector, continue to ascend, it is plausible to

infer that teaching faces growing competition in terms of financial rewards, thereby potentially rendering it less attractive to potential teachers.

Quality of Life Aspects

- *Job satisfaction*: The erosion of salaries is likely to contribute to heightened levels of job dissatisfaction among teachers, as they may feel undervalued. This, in turn, could negatively affect their enthusiasm for the teaching profession and their capacity to provide high-quality education.
- *Work-life equilibrium*: Reduced salaries are apt to create challenges for teachers in maintaining a harmonious balance between their professional commitments and personal lives. Such challenges may lead to burnout and a subsequent increase in attrition rates among teachers.

Educational Outcomes

- *Teacher proficiency*: It is plausible to assume that inadequate salary structures may deter talented individuals from pursuing careers in teaching, which could result in a decline in the overall quality of teachers within the profession.
- *Student attainment*: Teachers who are demotivated or overburdened due to inadequate compensation may struggle to deliver quality education, potentially impacting student outcomes and academic achievement.

Shortages in Teaching Personnel

- *Recruitment challenges*: The manifestation of meager salaries likely poses a substantive impediment to educational institutions' efforts to attract new teaching talent, particularly in certain regions or academic disciplines. This, in turn, may result in teacher shortages.
- *Retention concerns*: The allure of higher-remunerative opportunities may prompt experienced teachers to leave the teaching profession, resulting in a loss of institutional knowledge and stability.

Policy and Systemic Ramifications

- *Fiscal Constraints*: Given fiscal constraints, it is reasonable to assume that governments may prioritize budget allocations to other sectors over education, leading to a lack of investment in teacher salaries.
- *Education reforms*: The erosion of salaries may hinder the successful implementation of education reforms, as qualified teachers may resist changes that do not come with adequate compensation or incentives.

Perceptions Pertaining to the Teaching Vocation

- *Public perceptions:* A noticeable reduction in teachers' salaries is likely to influence societal perceptions of the teaching profession, potentially diminishing its historical prestige and standing.
- *Morale of teachers:* The degradation of remuneration can be expected to result in a reduction in morale among teachers, which may become evident in their interactions with students and parents, further impacting the profession's attractiveness.

Conclusions

The European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice report reveals a disheartening reality about the state of teachers' and school heads' salaries in Europe. This comparative analysis of teachers' and school heads' salaries in Europe highlights significant variations in remuneration levels, career prospects, and changes over time. The glaring disparities, limited salary growth potential, decreasing real wages in some countries, and discrepancies between teacher salaries and GDP per capita raise critical concerns about the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

These issues can deter talented individuals from pursuing teaching careers and drive experienced teachers away from the field. Addressing these challenges is imperative for the long-term health of education systems and the future of European societies. It requires concerted efforts by governments, policymakers, and stakeholders to ensure that teaching remains an attractive and financially sustainable profession. Failure to do so risks compromising the quality of education and the welfare of future generations.

The attractiveness of the teaching profession is influenced not only by salaries but also by working conditions, career prospects, professional development opportunities, and recognition. To address the erosion of teachers' salaries and enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession in Europe, policymakers, educational institutions, and society as a whole need to consider a combination of strategies. These may include increasing teacher salaries to reflect the importance of their role, improving working conditions, providing professional development opportunities, recognizing the value of teachers and promoting the value of education in society.

Remuneration policies targeted at teachers must form an intrinsic component of holistic and sustainable initiatives aimed at elevating the attractiveness of the teaching profession and fortifying the sustainability of education systems across the European landscape. Meticulously designed endeavors, tailored to enhance the teaching profession, are pivotal in the endeavor to attract and retain preeminent talent and, by extension, in nurturing the forthcoming generation of European citizens.

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