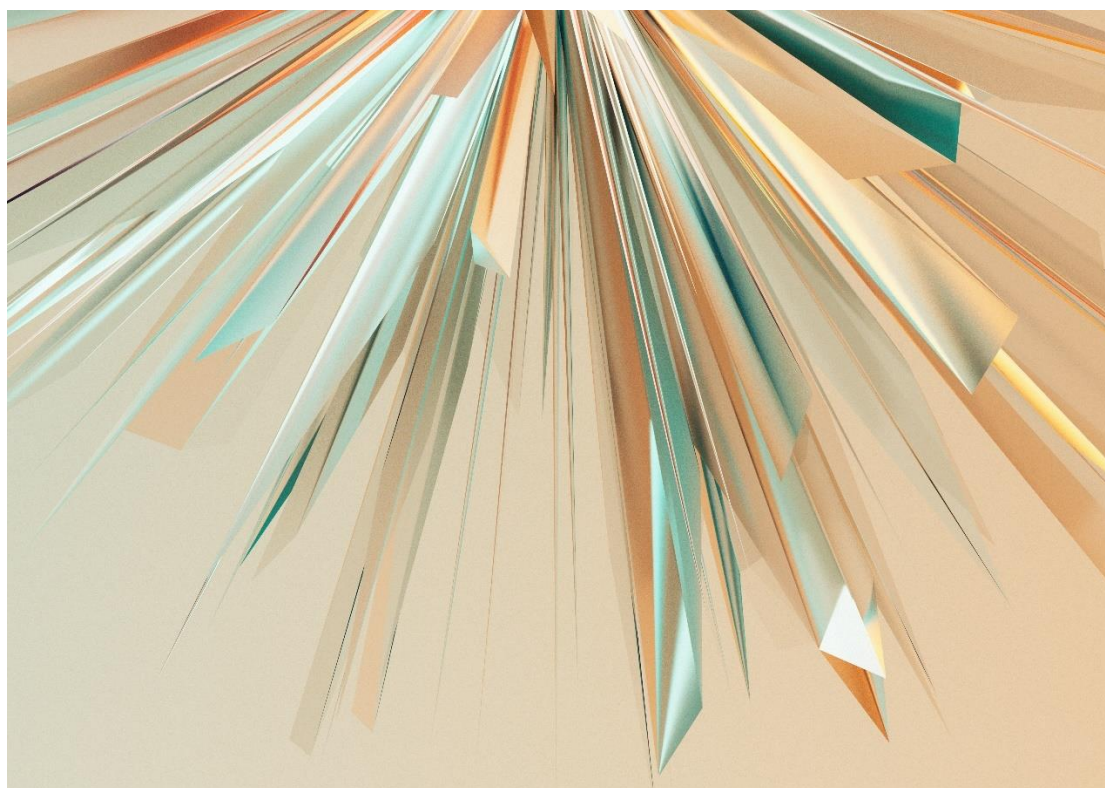


TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND HEADTEACHERS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN EUROPE:

**A CONTRIBUTION OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMITTEE FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION**



APRIL 2024

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FOREWARD – PAUL MEANY, PRESIDENT OF THE CEEC

Over recent years, the General Assemblies of the CEEC have included many conversations about the steps necessary to ensure the future of Catholic education in the ever-changing European contemporary society. From those discussions, it has become clear that good training of teachers and headteachers of Catholic schools will be a key requirement.

In this introductory exploration, we delve into the rich tapestry of education within the context of European Catholic schools, examining the ways in which educators are prepared to impart knowledge, foster character development, and nurture spiritual growth.

At the heart of education in Catholic schools lies a holistic approach that seeks to integrate faith, reason, and culture. Catholic educators emphasise the importance of nurturing the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. This philosophical foundation informs not only the curriculum but also the formation of teachers and headteachers, who are entrusted with the sacred task of guiding students in both intellectual and spiritual growth. However, it is proving quite a challenge for our schools to meet the demands of contemporary society while upholding the values and teachings of the Catholic Church and continuing the work of Jesus the teacher.

As you will read in this document, which has been drawn up by Prof Theo Van Der Zee, the representative of the Dutch Catholic and Christian Schools organisation (VERUS) at the CEEC, the preparation of teachers and headteachers in European Catholic schools encompasses a multifaceted approach that blends academic study, practical experience, and spiritual formation.

In an increasingly secular and diverse society, balancing academic rigour with religious education, addressing the needs of diverse student populations, and navigating complex ethical and moral issues present ongoing challenges for educators. However, these challenges also provide opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and renewal, as Catholic schools seek to adapt to the evolving needs of their communities while remaining true to their core mission and identity.

The CEEC network is ideally placed to be a significant hub through which our various associations can share their knowledge, experience, and projects. In this regard, although this current research is being published in both French and English, recent developments in technology now allow greater access to information in the many languages that make up the European educational landscape.

May I take this opportunity to thank our former President, Bro José Maria Alvira, and our former General Secretary, Guy Selderslagh, for their vision in commencing this project; our office manager, Géraldine Vallée, who has worked so hard on gathering the data and undertaking the translation; and our current General Secretary, Louis Marie Piron, for bringing the project to a successful conclusion. We have appreciated the many colleagues who presented to our recent General Assemblies on the opportunities for formation and training in their individual countries and we particularly thank Theo Van Dee Zee and Géraldine Vallée on bringing all that information together in this publication.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INITIAL OBJECTIVES

Every four or five years, the European Committee for Catholic Education (CEEC) identifies a working theme, i.e. a topic (usually in the form of a question to address) that is relevant for the association members to discuss. To contextualise, the CEEC is an international non-profit association that gathers 29 member-associations which represent Catholic Education in 28 countries in Europe. The European Committee serves as a meeting-point for the heads of these national Catholic networks and act as a study and information centre (more information in appendix 6.1).

Following a four-year-research on the intercultural and interreligious dialogue in Catholic schools in Europe, a proposition to focus on the training of teachers and headteachers was agreed at the General Assembly meeting in Malta in November 2019.

Education is increasingly essential to equip pupils with powerful tools to be part of our contemporary societies. Catholic education understands its educational endeavor in terms of the humanisation of man and the world, and the formation of the person as a whole and is characterised by its reference to a Christian concept of life centred on Jesus Christ (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2022). In the light of such societal developments as secularisation, diversity and conflict, it is nowadays even more relevant to support the teachers and headteachers who accompany young people throughout their schooling. They must be prepared and given room for reflection and critical thinking. Moreover, European countries are facing a shortage of teachers and headteachers. In an increasingly secular society, Catholic schools struggle to find candidates who match the school's vision and values.

In this context, several members associations of the CEEC had started working on the question of formation. The “Emerging Leaders” programme which was put in place by the Church University of Education in Krems and Vienna (Austria) and the Fordham University (United States), or the concept of “Dialogue school” which was developed by the University of Leuven (Belgium) are examples of such initiatives.

Consequently, it seemed relevant for the CEEC to reflect on the way Catholic Education stakeholders prepare, work and collaborate with training centres from a reflective and practical perspective: how the (national) framework and orientations can train the teachers and headteachers to a Christian education anthropology and give them knowledge of the beliefs and cultures that surround them? More precisely, the structure of the training systems, their audience, their limits, and challenges were to be examined. Another aspect to be tackled was the selection process, as well as the initial and the in-service training. Finally, this working theme aimed at highlighting and valuing the work provided by the staff in Catholic schools.

In conclusion, the working theme permits an exchange about tools, approaches and projects, as well as to mutualise the results and good practices given, on the basis of one general question: which type of training is provided to teachers and headteachers to meet the challenges they face in the contemporary society and in view of the educational mission of Catholic Education?

1.2 URGENCY OF THE THEME

The mission of Catholic schools involves “the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society” (Code of Canon Law, 1983, no. 795).

In this section we elaborate the mission of Catholic schools by means of three distinctive features. Teachers and headteachers are crucial to fulfil the mission but are faced with various issues that relate to the mission being under serious pressure. We present some of the issues to corroborate the urgency to reinvigorate the training and support of teachers and headteachers.

1.2.1. THE MISSION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Catholic schools are schools with a characteristic mission. As they are intrinsically connected to the Church’s mission, Catholic schools understand their educational endeavour in terms of the humanisation of man and the world, and the formation of the whole person. The Church considers Catholic schools “as a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole man, since the school is a centre in which a specific concept of the world, of man, and of history is developed and conveyed” (Sacred Congregation, cited in Miller, 2007, 453). The ‘proprium’ of a Catholic school is related to its religious perspective:

“No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth. But its proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illuminated by faith” (*Gravissimum Educationis*, no. 8).

Relying on Church documents, McLaughlin (1996) outlines three related general features that emerge as distinctive of Catholic education:

- (1) The embodiment of a view about the meaning of human persons and of human life. Catholic education is based on a specific theological and philosophical vision about the nature of reality and of human beings and their flourishing and destiny;
- (2) An aspiration to holistic influence. Catholic education involves a kind of integral formation in which culture, faith and life come together. An inspirational ideology based on the distinctive understanding of the human person acts as a unifying element of the educational endeavour and permeates all educational activities of the school;
- (3) Religious and moral formation. Catholic education seeks to bring about an integral formation of students in which religious and moral aspects are included. It is not about a transmission of religious or moral beliefs, but about a commitment to the Person of Jesus Christ.

With a view to the formation of the whole person, Miller (2007, 464) asserts that the distinctiveness of Catholic schools cannot rest solely on the shoulders of its religious education programme, but says that schools are “to provide [their] students with an integral education, [they] must foster love for wisdom, passion for truth, and the integration of faith, culture, and life”. In short, the educational endeavour of Catholic schools can be characterised by means of general features that refer to an integral vision on education, formation and humanisation and that permeate the whole educational programme. Based on the general features of Catholic

education, Catholic schools are invited to develop a vision about their educational endeavour in a specific historical, social and political context.

The striving for the mission cannot be understood without reference to this context. With a view to the striving, it really makes a difference to what extent a country acknowledges freedom of education, supports schools for Catholic education financially, or intervenes in educational matters. The context influences the way how the distinctive features of Catholic education are interpreted and elaborated and therefore how Catholic schools realise their educational endeavour.

It is widely acknowledged that teachers and headteacher are crucial to the interpretation and elaboration of the educational mission of Catholic schools (McLauglin, 1996; Grace, 1996; Wilkin, 2018; Fincham, 2022). Teachers and headteachers are expected to ‘be inspired by an apostolic spirit’, ‘provide a concrete example of the Catholic concept of the human person’, ‘have a mature spiritual personality’, ‘provide a wide ranging example of faith witness’, ‘share a view of life and of the educational task of the school’ – “so that ‘unity in teaching’ and the development of community and ethos can be achieved” (McLauglin, 1996, 150). In short, by sharing the integral vision, teachers and headteachers are expected to contribute to the Catholic endeavour and ethos of their school.

1.2.2. THE MISSION UNDER SERIOUS PRESSURE

Contemporary conditions, however, make it very hard for teachers and headteachers to meet the expectations and to contribute to a Catholic ethos. Their professional responsibility to interpret and elaborate the educational mission is under serious pressure.

Although they are in various countries (as America and Britain) constructed as defensive citadels to preserve the transmission of faith and culture, Catholic schools are not immune to societal developments such as secularisation, individualisation, diversity as well as to the marketisation and instrumentalisation of education (Grace, 1996, 2002). Developments such as secularisation not only affect the religious affiliation and beliefs of teachers in Catholic schools, but also manifest themselves in various issues that arise in the daily praxis of the Catholic school, such as the decreased willingness to participate at religious practice and prayer and the growing hostility towards religion (Fincham, 2022). Individualisation interrupts the self-understanding of Catholic schools as educational communities and emphasises individual rights over the rights of the community as a whole (Grace, 1996).

‘Marketisation’ refers to the striving for visible, measurable academic success as the almost exclusive criterion for judging a school to be a ‘good school’ (Grace, 2002). ‘Instrumentalisation’ refers to society’s impatient quest for learning outcomes, performance and accountability that has driven schools into the arms of a technical and instrumental rationality (Biesta, 2010). Following this rationality, the educational praxis is scrutinised through the lens of statistics and performance data. The intention is that the failure of a perfect match between input and output should be fixed and overcome by the application of strong, secure and predictable methods and procedures. This, however, appears to be at odds with the general features of the educational endeavour of Catholic schools.

These above-mentioned developments affect how Catholic schools perceive themselves and put their educational mission in terms of humanisation and the formation of the whole person in parentheses (Pring, 2018). They challenge the plausibility of the educational endeavour of Catholic schools and appear to make it for many future teachers (not all!) less attractive to work at these schools and for most teachers and headteachers in these schools less easy to contribute to a Catholic ethos.

The developments make it impossible for teachers and headteachers to continue as they used to do ('business as usual') or to try harder by using 'repair' strategies, for example by simply insisting to students and others that attending religious services is obligatory. They interrupt teachers and headteachers in their actions and make them urgently ask fundamental questions about their educational endeavour. What is it then up to them to do?

In order to find out what fruitful and constructive strategies teachers and headteachers could employ, we should first raise the question as to which issues teachers and headteachers of Catholic schools are confronted and with which they have to deal in order to fulfil their educational mission.

1.2.3. ISSUES OF TEACHERS AND HEADTEACHERS

Based on a literature review, teachers and headteachers are confronted with the following interrelated issues that are related to the understanding and realisation of the educational mission of Catholic schools. Although their impact and manifestations might differ, the issues are applicable to various countries in Europe.

First of all, the *recruitment and retention of teachers* and headteachers (Grace, 2018; Fincham, 2022). Although many schools - including public ones - in European countries have to deal with it, Catholic schools in particular are faced with a growing shortage of teachers and headteachers. Not only for reasons of restrictions in funding, but also high expectations regarding personal and professional life, make it more difficult for Catholic schools to recruit and retain teachers and headteachers. Teachers and especially headteachers are expected to be affiliated to the Church and to demonstrate a lifestyle that is compatible with the educational mission of the school – something that cannot be taken for granted anymore in contemporary times. How can Catholic schools successfully recruit and retain teachers and headteachers who meet these expectations regarding the personal and professional life and who can contribute to a Catholic ethos?

Related to the previous issue is the second issue of *professional identity* (Miller, 2007; Grace, 2018; Watkins, 2018). Traditionally, the professional identity of teachers and headteachers is understood in terms of a vocation. This understanding can partly be traced back to time when Catholic schools were run by religious sisters, brothers and priests who understood their work at schools as an expression of their religious vocation. Their reduced numbers in Catholic schools raised new questions not only regarding the understanding of the professional identity, but also regarding the spiritual resources and ethos of the schools. How can lay teachers and headteachers come to a many-faceted and layered understanding of their professional identity and contribute to the ethos of Catholic schools?

A third issue is the *religious and spiritual capital* of teachers and headteachers regarding the fulfilment of the educational mission of the school (Fincham, 2022; Wilkin, 2018; Hanemann, 2018). Nowadays, it cannot be taken for granted that teachers and headteachers possess a rich array of religious and spiritual capital to contribute to a Catholic ethos. The acquisition of this capital isn't a transmission of knowledge and beliefs but concerns 'programmes for the religious and spiritual development', and "needs to be grounded in the practical challenges of interpreting the tradition in the push and shove of everyday school life" (Wilkin, 2018, p. 177). The programmes are, among other things, to address the hermeneutical task of interpreting day-to-day interactions through the lens of the Gospel, the shared responsibility to formulate a Catholic vision across the curriculum, and the ongoing negotiation and construction of the community ethos. How can the acquisition of religious and spiritual capital by teachers and headteachers with a view to their professional task at Catholic schools best be designed?

A fourth issue concerns the *moral leadership* of teachers and headteachers of Catholic schools (Grace, 1996). All teachers and headteachers are confronted with moral issues and dilemmas on a daily basis, no matter at what school they work. Moral sensitivity and leadership is therefore demanded of all teachers and headteachers. In Catholic schools moral issues and dilemmas present themselves in pedagogical situations in the classroom, but also in balancing between Catholic values (e.g. to serve the poor and the powerless) and market values. Teachers and headteachers at Catholic schools are asked to be inspired by Catholic moral teaching, and to orient their moral evaluation and decision making to the good life having its origin in the person of Jesus Christ and its roots in the teachings of the Gospel. Moral inspiration and orientation is, however, not a matter of logical or procedural deduction, but far more a matter of engagement "in a continuing struggle with (...) ambiguities" (Grace, 1996, p. 77) of faith, culture and life. Teachers and headteachers might look for support, guidance and leadership to deal with moral issues and dilemmas; not on an instant basis or by means of ex cathedra statements or codes, but by developing their moral sensitivity and leadership. How can teachers and headteachers best be supported to develop their moral sensitivity and leadership?

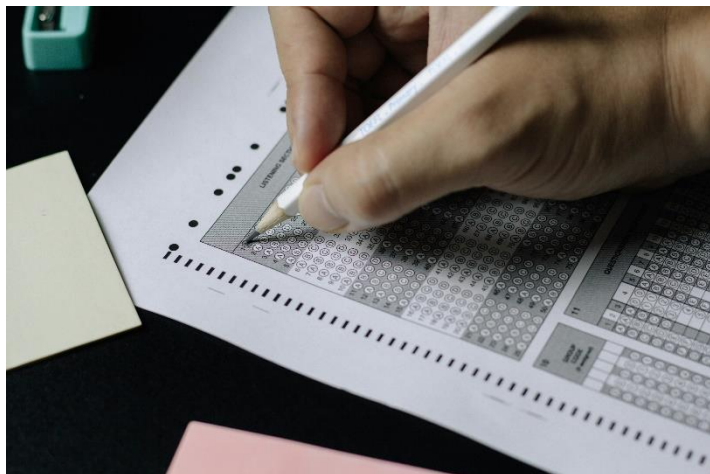
1.2.4. THE URGENCY TO TRAIN TEACHERS AND HEADTEACHERS

The educational mission of Catholic schools is under serious pressure. Due to societal developments such as secularisation, individualisation and diversity and to the marketisation and instrumentalisation of education, teachers and headteachers are confronted with various issues that interrupt their actions. While they are expected to contribute significantly to the educational mission of Catholic schools, teachers and headteachers cannot proceed as ever, shrink back from the issues in which these developments manifest themselves, and try harder by using repair strategies. They are faced with serious issues that cannot be ignored or glossed over. Issues such as the recruitment and retention of teachers and headteachers, their professional identity, their religious and spiritual capital and their moral sensitivity and leadership. Dealing with these issues isn't a matter of 'big steps, quickly home', but asks for a thorough approach.

Societal developments as well as the marketisation and instrumentalisation of education urge us to find out whether and how teachers and headteachers are initially and in-service trained and supported to deal with the serious issues with which they are confronted, particularly in view of the striving for the educational mission of their Catholic schools.

1.3. INQUIRY INTO PRACTICES

To begin with, a survey was carried out among the members of the CEEC. It took the form of a questionnaire on a Word document to be filled in and sent to the CEEC secretariat (questionnaire in appendix 6.2). The document was structured in three parts.



The first part concerned the training of teachers and headteachers. This part is subdivided into a preamble that gathers general information on the hiring conditions, then a set of questions about the initial training including a certification to teach or manage a school, and finally a set of questions about the in-service training (also known as Continuous Professional Development [CPD]), i.e. the training undergone during the professional career. The aim of these

questions is to identify whether training sessions exist. If so, the questionnaire enquires which institutions organise these modules, what is the type of content (managerial, theological approach...), the duration, the price, and the mandatory nature of these training sessions. *The second part* concerned the training of trustees and members of school governing bodies. The questions are structured in a same way as the first section of the questionnaire. *The last part* was a set of open questions. More precisely, the survey focused on the possible difficulties encountered in terms of teacher and headteacher recruitment as well as initial and in-service training.

Out of 29 members, the CEEC received the answers from 19 member countries. Practically speaking, the chart below lists the member countries which carried out the survey. Then, the total 18 completed forms were examined by the CEEC secretariat. Based on this analysis, some members were invited to present the results of their questionnaire. A total of 10 presentations have been given at the General Assembly meetings since 2019. The presentations allow the members to share, discuss, compare and deepen the results.

Training of teachers and headteachers: overview of the questionnaires and presentations

COUNTRY	QUESTIONNAIRE	DATE	PRESENTATION	DATE
ALBANIA	1	11-02-20		
AUSTRIA ¹	0	/	GA in Madrid	Oct 2023
BELGIUM - FL	1	09-10-20	GA on Zoom	Nov 2020
BELGIUM – FR/DE	1	02-04-21	GA on Zoom	April 2021
SPAIN	1	30-08-20	GA in Marseille	Dec 2022
FRANCE	1	02-11-20	GA on Zoom	Nov 2020
CROATIA	1	26-02-20		
IRELAND	1	12-02-20	GA in Valletta	Nov 2019
ITALY	1	12-10-20	GA in Vilnius	April 2023
THE NETHERLANDS	1	02-01-20	GA in Valletta	Nov 2019
NORWAY	1	06-03-20		
POLAND	1	09-03-21		
PORTUGAL	1	11-01-21		
ROMANIA	1	11-04-21		
SWEDEN	1	15-01-20		
SLOVENIA	1	02-02-20		
ENGLAND & WALES	1	09-06-21	GA in Athens	Oct 2021
SCOTLAND	1	08-03-21	GA in Vienna	Apr 2022
UKRAINE	1	15-01-20		
TOTAL	18		10	

Important: Data collection took place between mid-2019 and mid-2022. This period was marked by the COVID19 pandemic and political reforms, which may have affected the results collected in the first phase.

¹ The results are based on the presentation only – no filled in questionnaire was given to the CEEC.

2. FINDINGS FROM THE INQUIRY INTO THE CURRENT SITUATION

2.1. STRUCTURES OF TRAINING SYSTEMS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

Before all, it should be noted that the training systems vary from one country to another. For instance, some countries offer a very well-organised national training process while others have almost no structured training to accompany the teachers, headteachers and school governing bodies.

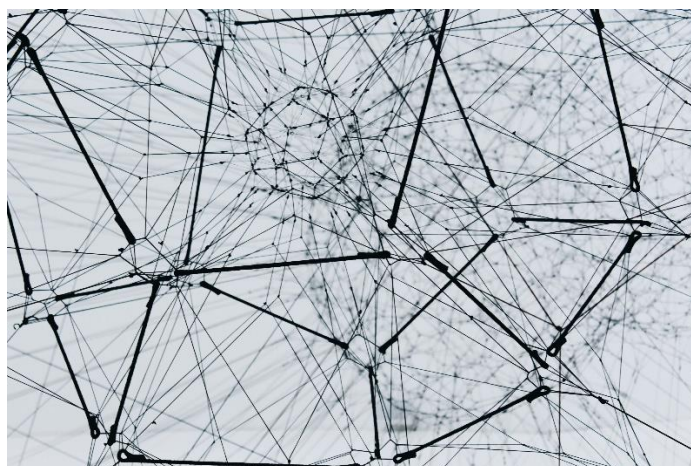
Based on the results of the survey, one distinction must be made between the initial and in-service training. The former issues the diploma or certification to hold a position as teacher or headteacher, while the latter is understood as a training process organised during the professional career. Secondly, the training programme intended for the teachers differs from the training modules proposed for the headteachers. Moreover, some schools are ruled by governing bodies which can take the form of trustees, congregations, or other types of administrative entities. In some cases, these groups offer training to manage the schools.

In this light, this chapter is accordingly divided into 5 sub-sections: (1) initial training for teachers in Catholic Education, (2) initial training for headteachers in Catholic Education, (3) in-service training for teachers in Catholic Education, (4) in-service training for headteachers in Catholic Education, and (5) training for governing bodies. A table is shown on page 15 to give an overview of the results.

2.1.1. INITIAL TRAINING FOR TEACHERS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

In a vast majority of the countries, the teachers are required to graduate from higher education institutions whether they are secular or Catholic colleges/universities to teach in a school. In other words, they must follow a national academic programme established by the state. For example, in Belgium, the candidate must receive the Teacher Training Certificate issued by the Higher Education Institutions as it provides the basic pedagogical competences to become a teacher. This certificate is not specific to Catholic Education although Catholic universities and pedagogical colleges issue this type of diploma. Apart from the state's programme, public and private Catholic or non-Catholic organisations and agencies offer professional training modules for teachers, for example in Albania and Italy.

As far as a specific training for teachers in Catholic education is concerned, the situation is diverse.



First, in some countries, for example Albania, Croatia, Italy, Poland, there is no national or regional structure that offers specific courses to get a certificate or diploma to the teachers who wish to work in a Catholic school. Consequently, to evaluate if the candidate is appropriate for the position in the Catholic school, formal or informal selection criteria² are often established by the school owners and/or managers³. The candidate then attends a job interview to check if he/she meets the requirements. These qualifications sometimes complete the set of criteria already imposed by the state, as in Croatia for example.

Secondly, some countries have developed training courses with clear references to Catholicism. This is the case in Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal and Norway.

In the case of Belgium and Portugal, initial training courses do not specifically refer to Catholic content, except for Religious Education and/or Ethics teachers in Catholic schools.

On the other hand, some higher Education curricula are compulsory for teachers who wishes to work in Catholic schools.

2.1.2. INITIAL TRAINING FOR HEADTEACHERS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Unlike the training structure for teachers, the initial training system for headteachers is often less developed. However, headteachers are usually former teachers such as in Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal. They undergo an interview to assess whether they are suitable for the position.

For instance, in Albania, the criteria to be hired are established by the congregation which owns the school. In Norway, when hiring new headteachers, the Catholic school owners give priority to candidates with formal management education from university and college, in addition to management experience. Where formal education is lacking, the schools make arrangements for the person concerned to take in-service education.

2.1.3. IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR TEACHERS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

In a vast majority of countries, in-service training for teachers who work in a Catholic school does not exist, for example in Albania. However, the national secretariats and associations put a wide range of events in place to accompany the teachers in their mission. In most cases, there is no public financial resources to support these initiatives. This means that the participants must pay for the registration fees except if extra private financing is found by the organisers.

Several concrete examples could be found in the questionnaires. In Croatia, the training programme is organised by the National Office for Catholic schools in cooperation with the Catholic University and Catholic colleges in Croatia. These training modules last one or two days. They cover a wide range of topics such as theology and other specific approaches to Catholic Education⁴. This is also the case in several other countries like Portugal where National Secretariat for Christian Education (SNEC) and Portuguese Association of Catholic Schools (APEC) organises conferences and Pedagogical days.

² Among other examples are being baptised, practising believers...

³ The school owners vary from one country to another: the congregation, the headteachers or the trustees/governing bodies.

⁴ It is unclear whether this concerns training both for teachers and headteachers.

These training sessions aim not only to improve specific skills around learning, but also to inculcate the school's identity elements such as its values, charism, mission and specific pedagogical method. These sessions cover the history of Catholic schools, their mission and theological and pastoral aspects. In Italy, some courses are organised at a national level by the Federation of Catholic Schools or by the religious congregations. They cover many different matters such as teaching methods, digital learning, school management, psychology, spirituality, etc. Religious subjects are often related to the current situation (pontifical documents, religious sociology, etc.) or to the congregation's charism. These courses are not mandatory for teachers working in a Catholic school. However, their participation is welcomed.

In some countries, teachers are required to complete a minimal amount of training courses. This is the case in Italy where the teachers must reach at least a 40-training hours. The University of Milan organises courses aimed at all teachers (not only those of Catholic schools), but also at headteachers and schools' administrators. In Poland, all teachers are required to develop their professional competencies in line with the needs of their schools. In this light, the teachers who work in a Catholic institution usually attend programmes that focus on religious formation, theological issues, Church teaching, for example. Moreover, the Council of Catholic Schools in Poland established a Teachers' Training Centre called "Pro Formatione" which run qualification courses for headteachers and teachers who work in Catholic schools. Although the activities of the Centre stopped in 2019, the Council of Catholic schools has continued providing such training programmes. Despite the existing state funding for continuing professional development, the fees are fully paid for by the participants. This programme addresses two main issues: Church Teaching and the Christian view of the person, as well as Faith and Social Issues from a Christian perspective.

2.1.4. IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR HEADTEACHERS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Some respondents say that such a service does not exist in their country. This is the case in Albania.

In other countries, initiatives are put in place. For instance, in Dutch-speaking Belgium, a training programme is organised for school heads in the form of an in-service training for newly appointed school heads (3 years, 10 days/year). School boards of Catholic schools encourage their newly appointed principals to participate in this course. In Italy, optional training modules are proposed (*see the section "in-service training for teachers in Catholic Education"*). In Norway, meetings and conferences are organised for teachers, headteachers, school pastors and chairpersons of the school boards to strengthen the understanding of the Catholic school's project. However, these events are not sufficiently structured and binding now. Some courses are still given to headteachers in Poland (*see the section "in-service training for teachers in Catholic Education"*). In the Netherlands various optional training modules are offered by the national association Verus on topics such as personal leadership, practical wisdom and identity of schools.

2.1.5. TRAINING FOR BOARDS/ GOVERNING BODIES/TRUSTEES

In many countries, trustees and governing bodies as such do not exist. For instance, in Albania, the schools are governed by the congregations each of which is the legal and financial authority. They appoint the headteacher who has a teaching role in the school. This is also the case in Croatia where the candidate is elected by the parents, the teachers and the educational staff. His application is then approved or rejected by the school founders. There is no specific training for the members of the school governing body.

In Spain, Portugal and Italy, the vast majority of Catholic schools are managed by religious congregations. These school boards are responsible for hiring new teachers and headteachers. In practice, the headteachers are usually teachers who used to work in a Catholic school which facilitates their training.

In other countries like Ireland, the Netherlands and Belgium, a training programme is organised for school board members.

Training of teachers and headteachers: hiring conditions, initial and in-service training systems and formation for governing bodies

COUNTRY	BASIC DIPLOMA TO WORK IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION⁵	SPEC. INITIAL TRAINING FOR TEACHERS IN CATH. EDUC	SPEC. INITIAL TRAINING FOR HEADTEACHERS IN CATH. EDUC	SPEC. IN- SERVICE TRAINING FOR TEACHERS IN CATH. EDUC	SPEC. IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR HEADTEACHERS IN CATH. EDUC	TRAINING FOR TRUSTEES / GOVERNING BODIES
ALBANIA	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	N/A
AUSTRIA ⁶	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
BELGIUM FL	YES	YES* RE	NO	NO	NO	YES
BELGIUM FR/DE	YES	YES* RE	YES	YES	YES	YES
SPAIN	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
FRANCE	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO
CROATIA	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	N/A
IRELAND	YES	YES* RE	NO	NO	NO	YES
ITALY	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO
THE NETHERLANDS	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
NORWAY	NO	YES*	NO	YES*	YES*	YES
POLAND	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO
PORTUGAL	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
ROMANIA	YES	YES ^{RE}	YES	YES ^{RE}	YES	YES
SWEDEN	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
SLOVENIA	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
ENGLAND & WALES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO

⁵ Basic diploma/certificate = a document given at a national level / that depends on the state's programme

⁶ The results are based on the presentation only – no filled in questionnaire was given to the CEEC.

SCOTLAND	YES	YES ^{RE}	YES*	NO	NO	N/A
UKRAINE	YES	NO	NO	YES*	NO	YES
TOTAL: 19 COUNTRIES						

*: Compulsory training

^{RE}: Specific training for Religious Education teachers

2.2. PERCEIVED CHALLENGES

2.2.1. PRECONDITIONS

Based on the results of the survey and the presentations, several difficulties are highlighted by the respondents. To assist, the chart below summarises the perceived challenges per country.

First, some members struggle to provide an initial and/or in-service training due to the preconditions and constraints imposed. To illustrate, Catholic schools in Albania mainly depends on the religious congregations. They therefore struggle to provide a joint national training programme for Education staff in Catholic schools. In this context, the National Commission for Catholic Education of Albania (KKEKSH) is willing to improve the initial training for teachers and enhance their formation, specifically linked to the Social Doctrine of the Church. In several countries, there is no such structure as the trustees or governing bodies. In Austria, the current system renders it difficult for the Interdiocesan Office for Teaching and Education to oblige teachers and school leaders to participate in the training programmes offered. The school owners are diverse and there is no common formation concept. This is also the case in Sweden where the three Catholic schools implement various methods when it comes to training the teachers to the life and faith of the Catholic Church. Although joint training sessions are sometimes organised, these initiatives are not carried out in a regular and methodical manner. In Slovenia, there is no national or diocesan strategy in place regarding the initial or in-service training. Moreover, the training modules are not accredited or compulsory. It is therefore difficult to engage the participants.

Secondly, many Catholic schools in Europe encounter difficulties with finances. The establishments often rely on the religious congregations and foundations, or on public funds granted by the state. The financial situation varies from one country to another. But at least 50% of the respondents claim that Catholic schools in their country experience financial obstacles, for instance in the treatment of the salaries, and especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is even more difficult to find enough time and money to work and pay for the training programme. This is the case in Albania, Belgium, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, England and Wales, Scotland and Ukraine. In many countries, the fees are paid by the participants themselves, sometimes with an extra help from the religious orders or private associations.

Thirdly, a great concern is the shortage of teachers and headteachers. Almost 80% of the respondents acknowledge that Catholic schools in their country lack candidates for these positions. More precisely, the schools suffer from a shortage of teachers in specific school subjects. This is the case in Portugal, the Netherlands or in Belgium where they mostly lack sciences, mathematics, and language teachers. On the other hand, the position of headteacher becomes increasingly complicated to hold as the school heads retire and the responsibility and the administrative workload increase. This is particularly the case in Ireland and Belgium. Likewise, the countries where governing bodies exist (trustees, organising bodies...) suffer from a shortage of members. To overcome the situation, volunteers or unexperienced and unqualified candidates are hired in the school and school board.



In the light of this, on average 30% of the respondents' experience difficulties in hiring the right candidates for the school. More precisely, the candidates do not meet the requirements of the schools either because their diploma does not correspond, or because of their involvement and willingness to work from a Catholic ethos. This is the case in Austria, Spain, France, Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Sweden, England and Wales and Scotland. Some of these countries

therefore implement new strategies to overcome the difficulty. To illustrate, in Croatia, a probation period of 6 months is put in place before the candidate gets a permanent position in the Catholic school. In other countries, Catholic schools and associations work in collaboration with their counterparts to reinforce the sense of belonging and Catholic ethos. In this light, they frequently set up international cooperation initiatives within the Erasmus+ programme for instance. Among other examples, the National Secretariat for Christian Education (SNEC), the Portuguese Association of Catholic Schools (APEC) and *Escuelas Católicas* in Spain recurrently cooperate, while regular meetings are held between twinned dioceses of France and Germany or Catholic schools in the Mediterranean basin. Partnerships have also been put in place between Catholic institutions in Norway and Sweden, and universities in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Unlike the former, some countries mention that another challenge is the international cooperation, such as in Albania where no training activities are organised in Catholic schools in collaboration with other countries in Europe for instance. Based on the answers, the presence of religious or priests in schools is decreasing while the multicultural and multi-religious context is increasing. This is particularly the case in Austria and Slovenia. Among other examples are listed geographical reasons. For example, in some geographical areas in Scotland, it is harder to recruit than others due to the distribution of the Catholic population in the country.

2.2.2. HOW TO CULTIVATE THE ETHOS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AT ITS HEART

In conclusion, the shortage of teachers and headteachers are the two elements mostly referred to as challenges by the respondents. This can lead to an extreme situation where the classes or even the schools must close due to the lack of education staff. The question of finance comes in second place. It is often complicated to receive state funding to pay the salaries of educational staff or management, for instance. Families are often asked to pay enrolment fees or additional costs. The difficulties linked to the training preconditions and the programme are also regularly mentioned.

On the whole, it is difficult for the CEEC to propose concrete solutions to these various issues. In particular, it would require a more in-depth analysis and more detailed research. However, in fourth place is the question of the candidate. Respondents report difficulties in finding a teacher or headteacher who fully works from the ethos of Catholic schools. Tools and initiatives were suggested throughout the presentations and in some of the questionnaires. The following chapter is devoted to this topic, which is set out under the following question: "How to cultivate the ethos at the heart of catholic schools?"

Training of teachers and headteachers: perceived challenges

COUNTRY	PRECONDITIONS	FINANCES	SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS OR HEADTEACHERS	CATHOLIC ETHOS	OTHER
ALBANIA	X	X	X		X
AUSTRIA*	X		X	X	X
BELGIUM - FL		X	X		
BELGIUM – FR/DE		X	X		
SPAIN			X	X	
FRANCE		X	X	X	
CROATIA	X		X	X	
IRELAND	X	X	X		
ITALY	X	X	X	X	
THE NETHERLANDS	X		X	X	
NORWAY			X	X	
POLAND		X	X	X	
PORTUGAL		X	X		
ROMANIA	X	X			
SWEDEN	X			X	
SLOVENIA	X	X	X		X
ENGLAND & WALES		X	X		
SCOTLAND		X	X		X
UKRAINE	X	X	X		
TOTAL: 19 COUNTRIES	10	13	16	9	4

3. LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

3.1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Although the training and support of teachers and headteachers in Catholic schools cannot be understood without reference to their historical, social and political context, it is possible and useful to elaborate guiding principles. Based on the literature review and on the findings of the CEEC investigation, we present two clusters of guiding principles – one related to the formal structure of training and support, another related to the content. First the idea of guiding principles will be explained. Each principle is illustrated by one or more interesting initiatives mentioned in the survey and the presentations. These projects take the form of training courses, programmes, events, or tools. Some of these examples cover more than the guiding principle they are referred to.

3.1.1. DEFINITIONS

Training and supporting teachers and headteachers aim to enable them to better fulfil their task and responsibility, that is: to contribute to the Catholic ethos of their school and to strive for its educational mission in terms of humanisation and the formation of the whole person. With that purpose various activities can be carried out as live and online courses, retreats, conferences, workshops and so on. Guiding principles are directions for deciding which activities are appropriate and how they best can be organised. They give guidance and orientation during the process of organizing training and support activities for teachers and headteachers.

Based on the literature review and on the findings of the CEEC investigation we now present guiding principles in fairly general terms. These principles should be interpreted and elaborated into specific diocesan and national contexts. We distinguish between more structural oriented principles and those who are more related to the content of the training and support. It should be noted that the list of principles is not exhaustive.

3.1.2. STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES

Structural principles relate to the more formal or procedural aspects of training and support of teachers and headteachers in Catholic education. They give guidance in the procedural approach, organisational embedding and matters of form and shape.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: *Opt for thorough practices of decision making*

To come to well-considered choices about activities will be carried out, thorough practices of perception, reflection, deliberation and decision making are recommended. In the Catholic tradition individual people and communities use discernment practices to come to well-considered choices about what to do with a view to living a good life.

A communal discernment practice is elaborated in four successive clusters: first perceive what's happening in schools, reflect on the underlying values at stake and relate them to the aims of the educational mission of Catholic schools, then deliberate on possibilities, and finally come to a decision (Van der Zee, 2023).



Within French Catholic Education, headteachers are trained at the Missioned Leaders School through a multi-stage process designed to prepare individuals to take on the responsibilities of a headteacher: (1) Determination: A year to enable individuals to reflect in an informed way on their choice to become a headteacher in a Catholic education context. (2) Pre-appointment training: A year to prepare for the role of headteacher by acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes. (3) Post-appointment training: 23 days of training divided into modules to support the newly appointed headteacher's professional practice. Training for headteachers appointed without prior training: A 41-day training programme to support new headteachers in their professional practice. Each stage includes specific activities, such as inaugural sessions, longer sessions, observation periods, review sessions and interviews with the supervisory authority to assess the trainees' progress and determination. Teaching methods include theoretical contributions, reflection workshops, case studies, meetings, personal accounts, debates and individual interviews. The one-week observation period enables trainees to experience the day-to-day life of a headteacher and to reflect on their own commitment and determination.

Every year, Portuguese Association of Catholic Schools (APEC) promotes a Pastoral Journey aimed at school principals and pastoral teams. The aim of the Pastoral Journey is to strengthen the knowledge and skills of school leaders and pastoral team members, enabling them to maintain, care for and develop the identity and mission of the school. Examples of Journey themes Challenges to the Identity of Catholic Schools, Catholic Schools and the Challenges of Education Today, Prayer in Catholic Schools, Sexuality and Gender, etc.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: *Think in sustainable networks*



Occasional activities don't often appear sustainable if they're not embedded in a network of people who share ideas, insights, expertise and experiences. To train and support teachers and headteachers in a sustainable and productive way, it is recommended to embed activities in one or more active networks within schools, between schools, and in between schools, dioceses and universities, national and international.

For example, teachers and headteachers come across a lot of moral issues and dilemmas and would benefit greatly from live and online networks of fellow-practitioners as well as experts to share experiences, ideas and possibilities (Fincham, 2022).

To illustrate, the Secretariat of Institutions of Free Education in Greece (SIELG) organised a one-day seminar to gather Catholic school leaders, school boards and teachers. The lectures focused on innovative leadership, innovations in administration and education, and artificial intelligence. The aim of this event was for the participants to share ideas, common projects, and discuss the ways to integrate Pope Francis' Global Compact on Education into their schools. The aim was to examine how the participants can move forward together in this new context, while preserving the identity and character of their Catholic school.

Another example is the initial training of headteachers in Catholic Education in France which leads to the development of professional friendship networks that enable those who need help to find it among their peers. Headteachers from the same congregation, the same diocese or the same professional organisation work together on issues relating to pastoral care, team management, teaching practices, etc. Within Catholic education in France, there are many proposals and forums for dialogue that enable headteachers to get together, such as the networking of schools involved in the international “Openness Label” on specific subjects (Erasmus, mobility, language practices, intercultural dialogue, etc.)

In collaboration with the Norwegian Catholic youth organisation, the school office of the diocese of Oslo is in the process of sending out an invitation to all Catholic student teachers in Norway to join an organized network of Catholic students. The purpose is to recruit Catholic teachers to our schools, helping to strengthen them in their Catholic faith and identity in a secular university and college system. Among other things, the aim is to offer them courses of different content, invite them to become trainees at Catholic schools, etc. Moreover, The service of school chaplain is currently being examined, including a revision of their work instructions with the aim to strengthen the cooperation and their role as stakeholders in building the schools' Catholic identity and ethos.

3.1.3. CONCEPTUAL PRINCIPLES

Conceptual principles give guidance in the substantive considerations relating to the content of the training or support.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: *Focus on the professional identity*



Traditionally, the identity of teachers and headteachers is understood in terms of a (religious) vocation in which personal and professional aspects intertwine. In the contemporary context of secularisation and individualisation, it is recommendable to focus on the professional aspects of the identity mainly (Watkins, 2018).

Teacher identity can be understood as “an assemblage of heterogeneous elements that are engaged in a dynamic and emerging flow of energy through its connectivities and relationships” (Doyle, 2023). With a view to the educational mission and the Catholic ethos, it would be recommended to take in the assemblage of various elements as point of application for training and support the professional development of teachers.

Professional development will undoubtedly affect personal aspects of the identity, and in the professional context of a school professional aspects are the best points of application.

In France for instance, these professional aspects that define identity are generally set out in the mission statement that the headteacher receives on appointment. This mission statement, which constitutes the organic link with the Church, specifies aspects related to the school and its environment, to which the headteacher must be vigilant. The school project provides specific guidance to all members of the educational community (including headteachers and teachers) in their professional practice.

In Ireland, the Bachelor of Religious Education programme in Dublin City University builds the agency of the religious education teacher through the de-construction and re-construction of a multiplicity of elements relating to teacher identity. The identity of the religious education teacher as curriculum maker is one element of vital significance (Priestley, Alvunger, Philippou & Soini, 2021). It promotes the teacher's capacity to make critical decisions and judgements in relation to content and pedagogical knowledge and to respond to the needs of each individual student in their particular context. This approach ensures that the religious educator can draw from the national curriculum but enact it also through their religious mission and vision.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4: *Ground activities in the practical challenges*

Training and support aim to enable teachers and headteachers to contribute to the Catholic ethos and to fulfil the educational mission of their school and should therefore not be exclusively religious or spiritual: "it needs to be grounded in the practical challenges of interpreting the tradition in the push and shove of everyday school life" (Wilkin, 2018, p. 177).



Teachers and headteachers are confronted with various issues that challenge their knowledge, skills and beliefs. To deal with these issues in the light of the educational mission, training and support should be grounded in their (daily) practices and enable them to re-evaluate and innovate their practices.

In Norway, the Catholic schools are applying for financial funds within a public support scheme for skills development at schools. The scheme involves local universities and colleges entering into collaboration with schools on guidance in various subjects. We have chosen to enter into collaboration with the NLA University College to guide teachers in topics related to strengthening the schools' Catholic identity and ethos. A pilot project is currently taking place at one of the Norwegian Catholic schools.

In the Bachelor of Religious Education programme in Dublin City University (Ireland), trainee teachers engage in ongoing authentic and real-life challenges that reflect the messiness and complexity of the classroom and schools. This takes place in the university using challenge-based learning, authentic assessments, reflective practice such as self-study and the use of workshops rather than lectures. We believe that learning is socially constructed and the building up of partnerships with schools as learning communities is vital for trainee teachers to experience these real-life challenges through the many experiences of school placement. Previously, we engaged in micro-teaching in which pupils from local schools came into the university to be taught by our trainee teachers. Now, we have moved to micro-placement where the trainee teachers in their first year, go to the school and teach for the first time. From the outset, they engage in the many challenges of becoming a religious education teacher and are supported by a network of people.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5: *Strengthen the moral sensitivity and leadership*



Teachers and headteachers are confronted with moral issues and dilemmas on a daily basis. They might look for support, guidance and leadership to deal with moral issues and dilemmas in their professional context; not on an instant basis or by means of ex cathedra statements or codes, but by developing their moral sensitivity and leadership (Grace 1996, 2018).

A fruitful way of support would be a network of teachers and headteachers in which they can share their moral issues and dilemmas and deliberate under wise guidance possible ways to deal with these issues and dilemmas.

In France, each school is supported by a "guardianship" which is either a diocese or a religious congregation. This guardianship is at the service of the growth of individuals, calling them to creative freedom in fidelity to the mission they have received. The guardianship authority encourages the vitality of the educational community by paying attention to the school's relational climate, its capacity for pedagogical, educational and pastoral innovation, and the participation of all in implementing the educational project.

To illustrate, The Good Shepherd Leadership Pathway (GSL) is the main project of the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES) for the training of school leaders. The initiative is a vocational leadership journey that accompanies Catholic teachers and navigates four elements of Vocational Leadership: Stewardship, Relational Leadership, Pastoral Leadership and Service Leadership. It offers experiences and opportunities for personal prayer and reflection, formation in the vision and values of Catholic Education, knowledge of Church teaching and the chance to become familiar with the Catholic school system internationally. The pathway has 3 elements: (1) "Core" using traditional approaches for building knowledge, skills, understanding and experience of a faith leader by participating in conferences, Church Teaching, Pilgrimage & Retreat opportunities, Master Classes and Personal Reflection activities; (2) "Formational" using the heritage of the Church and its expertise in accompanying those who are discerning their vocation; (3) "Dialogue and Discovery" allowing school leaders to work in collaboration with Catholic educators in Scotland and beyond with the aim to develop their own area of interest, work with other Catholic educators and, through shared dialogue, learn from each other. In addition, elective courses allow school leaders to engage in other aspects of Church life to gain a deeper understanding of the Universal Church and the role education plays.

Another example is the programme "Emerging Leaders of Christian Schools" ⁷ which is developed at the Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/Krems in cooperation with Fordham University in NY. It is made available to first- and second-year students who have been recognized as having outstanding leadership potential by professors, administrators, and fellow students. Through workshops, seminars, guest speakers, and interactive sessions,

⁷ More information: <https://www.fordham.edu/student-life/student-involvement/office-for-student-involvement-at-lincoln-center/student-leadership-programs/fordham-university-emerging-leaders-fuel-program/#:~:text=The%20FUEL%20program%20is%20a,%2C%20administrators%2C%20and%20fellow%20students.>

students will learn valuable leadership skills and have the opportunity to develop self-confidence and increase self-awareness. Workshop topics include: Ignatian leadership; Creative problem solving; Public speaking; Diversity in leadership; Stress management; Networking and mentorship.

In Norway, a programme introduces its participants to the Church's tradition and teachings so they contribute to building our Western civilization⁸. Two studies are organised for teachers in Catholic schools, but also catechists, deacons and other stakeholders active in the Catholic Church who need an introduction to Catholic theology and educational philosophy. On the one hand, the study of “Catholic Theology and Philosophy of Education” emphasises the Catholic understanding of formation and education, and central theological topics. It provides an overview and understanding of the Catholic Church's structure and its diversity both in Norway and in the world. The course aims to give an understanding of the Catholic Church as an educational actor, and to meet the ecclesiastical and religious diversity in everyday school life. The study also provides competence for other work and involvement within the church context: catechesis, training, information services, etc. This study will be compulsory for all teachers from autumn 2024 following an agreement between the schools and the diocese's school office to finance it for the school employee. On the other hand, the study of “Christian Faith, Religion and Philosophy in Catholic Education” provides an in-depth study of Christianity, philosophy, religion, outlook on life and ethics, with a particular focus on teaching the subjects KRLE, Catholic Christianity and Religion in Catholic schools.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6: *Contextualise, dynamize and innovate thinking about and realisation of the Catholic ethos and identity*

By sharing the integral vision, teachers and headteachers are expected to contribute to the Catholic identity and ethos of their school (McLaughlin, 1996; Wilkin, 2018). An integral vision, identity and ethos, however, are not static, but develop and transform over time. Contributing to the ethos and identity is therefore not simply a matter of transmission of knowledge, but an invitation to participate at the ongoing meaning-making and contextualisation of the educational endeavour of Catholic schools (De Jong, 2007; Boeve, 2019).



Teachers and headteachers are invited to hold a dialogue in the school as well as with the school environment about the educational endeavour, ethos and identity. Training and support are needed to hold this dialogue.

To illustrate, the “Dialogue School” is a concept developed by the Dutch-speaking association in Belgium, Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen. It focuses on dialogue, difference and Catholic identity in the school context of a post-Christian and post-secular society.

⁸ More information: <https://www.nla.no/studietilbud/studieprogrammer/videreutdanning-i-katolske-studier/>
<https://www.nla.no/studietilbud/emner/2022/vuks801/> <https://www.nla.no/studietilbud/emner/2023/vuks802/>

Another example is the set of the training courses on “Mission of the Christian School”⁹, which are offered by the Training Institute of Catholic Education (IFEC). These sessions focus on the educational project of Catholic teaching in French-speaking and German-speaking Belgium through various aspects.: (1) Situate the Catholic reference in the world of our schools today - Define some key concepts (religion, heritage, values, identity, etc.); (2) Deconstruct alienating representations (sacrificial, fundamentalist, relativistic, etc.); (3) Clarify the notion of specificity in a pluralist context; (4) With the help of a renewed conception of the Christian heritage (centred on the notions of agape and Messiah), understand the central notions of the Mission of the Christian school (person, links, decentring), grasp the major links and the challenges for tomorrow; (5) Imagine new teaching practices in the light of the text "Mission of the Christian school" (the logic of giving, fragility, not knowing, etc.).

And another example are the various training and supervision activities that are organised by Verus in the Netherlands to understand ethos and identity in terms of quality of education. The activities take place under the heading of ‘narrative appreciation’ and encourage (future) teachers and headteachers to reinvigorate their ethos and the identity of their schools in terms of narrative, discursive, performative and ethical quality that is anchored in a Catholic vision on education.¹⁰

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7: *Enhance an inquisitive attitude*



Reflection is an important and indispensable quality of every professional. Teachers and headteachers too are invited to reflect on their professional actions with a view to the educational endeavour of their school. Reflection is not only oriented to tackle issues more effectively, but also to investigate issues more profoundly with a view to the educational mission. An inquisitive attitude is very much helpful to reinvigorate the educational mission (Stuart-Buttle, 2018; Richardson, 2018).

By participating in networks of researchers, (pedagogical) advisors and practitioners, teachers and headteachers are invited to deepen their reflection and to reinvigorate the educational mission of their school.

In the Bachelor of Religious Education programme in Dublin City University¹¹ (Ireland), trainee teachers learn to engage in reflective practice through engagement with a reflective e-portfolio across the four years of the programme. Each year before placement, they spend two weeks in a school, exploring the culture and context of the school so that they can make curriculum and pedagogical decisions based on this understanding. They dialogue with all the significant people in the school that they will encounter such as the principal, deputy principal, chaplain, special needs department, guidance department, co-operating teachers etc. The centrality of the child is paramount, and they learn the needs of their pupils during these context and engagement weeks through the network of different people.

⁹ <https://enseignement.catholique.be/diocese/le-comite-diocesain-codiec-de-liege/les-questions-de-sens/leducation-chretienne/>

¹⁰ <https://verus.nl/publicaties/narratief-waarderen>

¹¹ <https://reflect.dcu.ie/view/view.php?t=eFrRDQ8VTfXXIMAog7&login>

4. REFLECTIONS - LOUIS-MARIE PIRON, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CEEC

THE WORLD IS CHANGING

The European Committee for Catholic Education's study on the training of teachers and headteachers in Catholic schools shows that, whatever the degree of commitment to training in the networks of each member country, it is considered essential. Unfortunately, although the very job of teachers and school leaders is to train children and young people, they still do not have training systems that are in line with today's realities.

TRAINING IN HOPE

Our societies are undergoing profound and lasting change. For many people today, the world is a frightening place. Violence is spreading more and more through conflicts and wars, even in our own countries. What's more, climate change is predicting a deterioration in living conditions on earth. As a result, some of our young people are understandably losing faith in the future. Against this backdrop, schools, and Catholic schools in particular, have a duty to provide hope. In concrete terms, this means educating young people to embrace the world around them by showing them how they can improve their immediate environment to enhance their living conditions and improve relations within their "school community".

To achieve this, teachers can no longer be content to simply teach the school curriculum and prepare for exams. Naturally, this mission remains paramount, but they must also ensure that they train young people to keep hope alive. Not in an incantatory way, but through daily practices, including teaching and education.

They also need to be trained in positive classroom leadership techniques, including pedagogical techniques. In fact, they should be prepared to pass on knowledge in such a way that young people see history, science and philosophy in a hopeful light - a light that is neither cynical nor fatalistic. This requires the implementation of teaching and educational practices that need to be learned in order to be mastered.

TRAINING IN TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS

We are experiencing exponential technological change. The most striking examples are the development of artificial intelligence in all areas of our lives and the omnipresence of all types of screens in our daily lives, with the addictions they generate. Young people are generally more comfortable with these technologies than the adults who supervise them. The latter may legitimately express rejection or even fear in the face of the new lifestyles that are emerging as a result of these technologies.

As educators, we must not turn our backs on them, but rather understand how they work and the new possibilities they offer. We need to grasp the opportunities they offer from an educational point of view and use them accordingly. As these technologies open up new areas, the ethical framework for their use must necessarily be considered.

These technical, pedagogical and ethical dimensions certainly need to be taken into account in teacher training so that they are not at a loss when dealing with young people. They need to be trained to master the tools, at least in broad terms, so that they can work together to devise ways of using them in the classroom. The moral issues surrounding the use of these tools also need to be addressed.

TRAINING IN SOCIAL SKILLS

It is becoming increasingly common to hear it said that the world has become a village. The development of means of transport and communication has brought people much closer together. However, fear of the other seems to be spreading more and more, and rejection of difference and isolation are becoming reflexes.

Yet encounters and relationships are key features of our Catholic religion. So we need to break down the barriers between peoples. To do this, it is essential to develop training in intercultural dialogue and to teach relationships. It's not something you can improvise, it's not something you can just decide to do in order to improve your relationships with people who are different from you.

Teacher training must therefore include a section on mastering the know-how and interpersonal skills needed to deal with other people by seeking to understand them and not by trying to impose our own ideas on them, or even by rejecting them. From a pedagogical point of view, the aim is to propose practices that encourage cooperation rather than competition between students.

CHRISTIAN MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Our educational projects are based on the principles of Christian anthropology. If we want them to develop in favourable soil, they need to be rooted in a coherent school operation. To achieve this, we need to put in place a management system based on the principles of the Church's social doctrine. Our headteachers manage professional organisations with a mission for the Church, and the conditions are right for schools to be places where this thinking can be put into practice.

The training of headteachers must therefore enable them to understand the major principles of subsidiarity, solidarity, participation and the common good, so that they can translate them into practical management tools. The training itself must be built around these principles to show trainees how they can put them into practice.

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6. APPENDICES

6.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE CEEC

Set up in 1974 as the regional secretariat of the Catholic International Education Office (OIEC), the European Committee for Catholic Education (CEEC) is an international non-profit association (according to the Belgian law dated June 27, 1921). It is the cooperation tool for 29 Catholic education networks in 28 Central, Eastern and Western European countries: Albania, Austria, Belgium (Flemish and French speaking), Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, England & Wales, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland (Eire), Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine. CEEC is a meeting-point for the heads of these networks and also a study and information centre. Moreover it plays the role of a promoter of free Catholic education towards the various European bodies. CEEC represents more than 35,000 schools and 8 million pupils.

In order to play an effective part in the field of education, CEEC wishes:

- to serve the education of young people and to study the fundamental principles of this education as well as the problems caused by their application;
- to defend and promote the interests of Catholic education with various official European bodies and all organisations interested in education at a European level;
- to promote the collaboration of its members in order to ensure didactical and pedagogical development and improvement of Catholic education;
- to encourage private initiatives as well as legal provisions taken at a national and at an international level in order to promote education in its various forms;
- to actively promote the effective carrying into practice of freedom of education as a fundamental condition for the functioning of a democratic society, in conformity with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and with the additional Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights;
- to help its members, and more particularly the more underprivileged ones, in the fulfilment of their rights and duties;
- to highlight the complementary needs both of the educators and of the specific contribution of Catholic education to the educational project;
- to co-operate with other organisations participating in Catholic education at a European and international level.

6.2. QUESTIONNAIRE: TEMPLATE

Part 1: Teacher and Headteacher Training

A. Preamble

In your country/region, when you hire teachers/headteachers in a Catholic school, which hiring conditions do you request to the applicant? (For example, an initial training in a Catholic institution, an internship in a Catholic school, a job interview with a specific person, a religious commitment, being baptised, a recommendation...) Could you briefly explain?

B. Initial training (i.e. the training which issues the diploma or certificate to hold the position of teacher/headteacher)

a. A specific initial training is organised for teachers/headteachers of Catholic Education:
Yes/No

- b. Which institution (Catholic College/Catholic University/other) organises an initial training intended for teachers/headteachers?
 - c. Are these Colleges/Universities/other institutions funded by public bodies or candidate's contribution? And up to what percentage for each part?
 - d. Could you briefly explain what is specific to Catholic Education in these trainings? For example, which courses, which approaches or methods, which practical internship, which theological approach....?
 - e. Is this training compulsory to work in a Catholic school? Yes/No
- C. In-service/continuing training (i.e. training that teachers/headteachers can/must take during their career in Catholic Education)
- a. In your country/region, is an in-service training organised for teachers and headteachers in Catholic Education? Yes/No
 - b. Is it compulsory to have followed specific modules to work as a teacher or headteacher in a Catholic school?
 - c. Which institution (Catholic College/ Catholic University/ other institution) organises this training programme?
 - d. Are the institutions that organise this training funded by public bodies or by the candidate's contribution? And up to what percentage for each part?
 - e. How long does this training last and when is it organised during the year (during the holiday, during the day, in the evening...)?
 - f. Could you briefly explain what is specific to Catholic Education in these trainings? For example, which courses, which approaches or methods, which practical internship, which theological approach....?

Part 2: Training of members of School Governing Bodies/Trustees

A. Preamble

In your country/region, how are chosen the members of the School Governing Bodies/Trustees (appointment, co-option, recommendation...)?

B. Training

- a. Are the members of the School Governing Bodies/Trustees obliged to have taken a specific training in Catholic Education?
- b. Which institution (Catholic College/ Catholic University/ other institution) organises this training programme?
- c. Are the institutions that organise this training funded by public bodies or by the candidate's contribution? And up to what percentage for each part?
- d. What is specific to Catholic Education in this training? For example, which courses, which methods, which internship, which training place, which theological approach....?

Part 3: Open questions

- a. In your country/region, do you encounter difficulties when hiring teachers, headteachers or members of Trustees? If so, which are they?
- b. How do you handle potential hiring difficulties? (Do you have any strategies to replace a person? Do you hire less qualified candidates? Do you offer bonus or various advantages...?)

- c. In your country/region, do you encounter difficulties regarding the initial and in-service training in Catholic Education? (Such as financing, participation, recruitment of trainers, inadequate moment of the year, too constraining training...)
- d. Which aspects could/should be improved in the initial and in-service training? Do you identify the challenges/issues in terms of specific training in Catholic Education for your country/region?
- e. In your country/region, are there cooperative actions with other countries/regions in terms of training? If so, could you briefly explain? (Methods...)

6.3. SUMMARY: PERCEIVED CHALLENGES PER COUNTRY

Albania: no specific in-service and continuous training process for Catholic Education. KKESH would like to improve the initial training for teachers and enhance the formation of human being (linked to the Social Doctrine of the Church). They also lack teachers and headteachers, as well as international cooperative actions.

Austria: Catholic schools suffer from a severe shortage of teachers. They also experience difficulties in finding teachers and school leaders with a Catholic or other religious background. The presence of religious or priests in schools is decreasing while the multicultural and multi-religious context is increasing. The Interdiocesan Office for Teaching and Education has limited possibilities to oblige teachers and school leaders to participate in the training programmes offered. There is a large number of different school owners and no common formation concept.

Dutch-speaking Belgium: There is a shortage of teachers and, to a lesser extent, school leaders. More specifically, in recent years, the number of students enrolled in teacher training colleges has decreased and the quality of the intake has deteriorated. The funding of higher education is therefore under great pressure. In addition, school leaders do not work in schools during the training period, even though they see it as an important element of self-development and professionalisation. Finally, 95% of the school board members are volunteers without remuneration, which requires a special commitment. Moreover, it is difficult to find a balance in terms of the professionalisation of school board members: What training do they need? What can be organised? It has been observed that the percentage of participation increases every year as the school board members feel the need to professionalise.

French and German-speaking Belgium: The shortage of teachers in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation is a known fact. In addition, the colleges and universities responsible for initial teacher training are chronically underfunded, which means that they are not always able to provide students with the best possible training. As far as continuing education is concerned, the following difficulties can be pointed out: 1) A method of funding that does not take sufficient account of changes in training costs (premises, fees, etc.); 2) Cumbersome administrative constraints that presuppose a sufficient number of qualified management staff; 3) For certain subjects, the difficulty in finding trainers with specialised expertise who provide their services at "reasonable" fees; 4) The difficulty in reconciling the efficient organisation of schools and the setting up of ambitious training programmes.

Spain: In some places there are difficulties in recruiting teachers who meet the requirements in terms of qualifications and at the same time are "in tune" with the educational project of the school. Logically, these difficulties are greater in smaller localities and in certain subject areas. There are some difficulties in finding teachers for secondary religious education and in obtaining sufficient state funding.

France: On the one hand, there are major difficulties in recruiting headteachers for first level schools, especially in small schools where the headteacher has only half a day a week for management duties, the rest being devoted to teaching. There is also a shortage of teachers in both Catholic and state education. The profession is no longer attractive, partly because of a decline in social recognition. In addition, the Catholic education management bodies and the ageing supervisory bodies have recruitment problems. As regards in-service training in Catholic education, it remains difficult to recruit trainers for in-service training. It is a demanding job that requires a great deal of adaptation to different realities, and there are few volunteers to do it. Finally, on the question of funding, it's impossible to find funding for aspects that are specific to us: the pastoral dimension of education and pedagogy, theology, and so on.

Croatia: It is sometimes difficult to find a candidate who understands the specificity of Catholic schools and education. Therefore, a probation period of 6 months is put in place before the candidate gets a permanent position in the school. The biggest challenge is to properly train new teachers to work in a Catholic school as the number of Catholic institutions is increasing.

Ireland: Although there are just enough primary and secondary teachers to meet demand, there are shortages (particularly in Dublin where the cost of living is higher) in a number of subject areas (e.g. Irish, Physics, Home Economics). In terms of promotion, many teachers are happy to apply for the post of deputy headteacher. However, each year it becomes increasingly difficult to attract candidates for the post of Principal, particularly at the secondary level. There are a number of important reasons for this decline, but chief among them is the ever-increasing workload and responsibility of the principal. The number of Catholic education providers is small and there is an inadequate supply of trainers for these providers.

Italy: it is difficult to hire qualified teachers due to the lack of training programme, the limited economic resources of Catholic Education and the competition with the state schools which offer a better salary.

The Netherlands:

Norway: The biggest challenge for Catholic school owners is to find the right candidate. To deal with this problem, Norwegian Catholic schools usually collaborate with another Christian organisation that gathers 150 school members on average. However, one must note the differences between Catholic schools and other Christian schools. On the one hand, Catholic schools have a somewhat different educational philosophy. On the other hand, Norway has a Lutheran tradition. Lutheran schools represent the vast majority of the free schools.

Poland: The Catholic schools suffer from a shortage of teachers because the job is not seen in an attractive manner due to the stress it brings and the low salaries it gives. In these circumstances, it is often difficult to find a candidate with good professional skills and with their roots in faith.

Portugal: The Catholic schools suffer from a shortage of teachers in specific school subjects. The schools implemented various strategies to overcome the situation such as reinforcing the sense of belonging to the school, through the school climate and culture, and strengthening relationships, particularly within the educational staff. Many schools (particularly those run by religious congregations) have set up international cooperation initiatives, the content and purpose of which vary from one school to another. The National Secretariat for Christian Education (SNEC) and the Portuguese Association of Catholic Schools (APEC) have also cooperated with their European counterparts, notably *Escuelas Católicas* in Spain. Finally, several schools have joined the Erasmus+ programme to develop projects on a European scale.

Romania: In general, many teachers want to work in Catholic schools. A challenge would be to work more closely on the training of teachers who were originally trained in state faculties or who have worked for several years in schools other than those included in the vision of Catholic education. The initial and in-service training of teachers of religion and theological subjects is well developed. Difficulties sometimes arise in the training of teachers of other subjects to have a specific approach to Catholic education.

Sweden: It can be difficult to find Catholics with the formal teacher training required in Sweden. Similarly to the situation in Norway, the headteachers would like to see a central office for Catholic education, as there is little cooperation within the diocese in Sweden, although there is a formal link with the diocese. At present, the three Catholic schools use different methods to train their teachers in the life and faith of the Catholic Church.

Slovenia: Several teacher profiles pose serious challenges in terms of employment. It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit ICT specialists, teachers for children with special needs and teachers for the early years of primary school. The choice, which used to be sufficient to find the best possible candidates, is diminishing. In terms of governing bodies, the main challenge is the general decline in religious vocations and the availability of clergy able and willing to run schools. Finally, there is no real system or strategy for initial or in-service training. As a result, teachers have no real motivation to participate in training, which is often not accredited.

England and Wales: The first challenge is the recruitment of students into initial teacher training, resulting in a shortage of RE specialists in secondary schools. It is also difficult to recruit headteachers because a large number of headteachers have decided to bring forward their planned retirement as a direct result of the huge increase in workload associated with COVID-19. Conversely, some headteachers have delayed their retirement. Either way, this creates a significant number of leadership vacancies to be filled, exacerbating an already challenging situation. Financial constraints have had a severe impact on dioceses, where staff cuts will reduce the capacity to support diocesan schools with advice and training. Similarly, central government cuts have affected local authority budget allocations to schools, where difficult decisions have to be made about many competing priorities.

Scotland: Recruitment to schools is a difficulty for both denominational and non-denominational schools. There are also some geographical areas where recruitment is more difficult because of the distribution of the Catholic population in Scotland. In some cases, people who are nominally Catholic choose not to teach in the Catholic sector. In addition, all Catholic school headteachers actively support and fund CLPL opportunities that are linked to the Catholic identity and culture of the school. However, school budgets have been cut drastically and they cannot always afford the cost of the teacher's release (and hiring a cover teacher) and the course fees. There may also be no one available to cover the teacher's classes due to staffing levels, so although the teacher is very willing, the HT cannot allow anyone to attend. Finally, the timing of the CLPL, the location and the perceived workload are all challenges, which is why the service has moved to online sessions, which has helped to enable more people to attend the training sessions. However, there is an issue of the relational aspect of the work that cannot be achieved through virtual meeting rooms.

Ukraine: The general trend is a shortage of teachers. Applicants do not meet the requirements, especially in terms of Catholic school values and salaries. Funding is difficult to obtain.

6.4. FILLED IN QUESTIONNAIRES

Given the volume of these files, please contact the CEEC secretariat to obtain this information.
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6.5. PRESENTATIONS MADE DURING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

Given the volume of these files, please contact the CEEC secretariat to obtain this information.
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