

Teachers in Europe

Careers, Development and Well-being

Eurydice Report



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FOREWORD



Teachers are the front-line workers in education. Having motivated teachers is one of the essential prerequisites of a successful education system in which students from different backgrounds can flourish and reach their full potential. The transition from face-to-face to distance learning due to the global health crisis has further underlined the vital role of teachers in providing all students with equal and quality learning opportunities.

This crisis has shown the strengths of our education systems, but also weaknesses, and has taught us important lessons on how to adapt to the current context. The crisis required us to improve digital education and equip teachers with relevant and adequate skills. The crisis has also stressed the need to invest in joint efforts and further reinforce the amazing spirit of our education community across Europe. The more we cooperate, the more we can create new exciting opportunities. Among such opportunities are the Erasmus Teacher Academies and eTwinning, and teachers are essential for both initiatives. Erasmus Teacher Academies create communities of practice, notably on initial teacher education and continuous professional development, while eTwinning is a community in which teachers can learn how to adopt innovative teaching methods and support students while at home.

Our Communication on *achieving the European Education Area by 2025* puts teachers at the heart of education. We proposed concrete measures, such as a revised learning mobility framework enabling teachers to overcome obstacles and benefit from travelling abroad for learning purposes when COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted. The Commission also plans to develop a European guidance tool for the development of national career frameworks that support teachers' career progression.

This new report examines the key policy issues that have an impact on lower secondary teachers across Europe. The report connects qualitative Eurydice data on national policies and legislation with quantitative data from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) on practices and perceptions of teachers. The analysis illustrates how national policies and regulations can contribute to enhancing and supporting the teaching profession.

I am confident that this report will be a great help to education policy makers and other stakeholders at national and European level. I hope that it will inspire and support the EU Member States to exchange best practices, to learn from each other and to work towards a strong and effective European Education Area.

Mariya Gabriel

Commissioner responsible for
Innovation, Research, Culture,
Education and Youth

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CODES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Country codes

EU	European Union	CY	Cyprus	UK	United Kingdom
BE	Belgium	LV	Latvia	UK-ENG	England
BE fr	Belgium – French Community	LT	Lithuania	UK-WLS	Wales
BE de	Belgium – German-speaking Community	LU	Luxembourg	UK-NIR	Northern Ireland
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community	HU	Hungary	UK-SCT	Scotland
BG	Bulgaria	MT	Malta	EEA and candidate countries	
CZ	Czechia	NL	Netherlands	AL	Albania
DK	Denmark	AT	Austria	BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina
DE	Germany	PL	Poland	CH	Switzerland
EE	Estonia	PT	Portugal	IS	Iceland
IE	Ireland	RO	Romania	LI	Liechtenstein
EL	Greece	SI	Slovenia	ME	Montenegro
ES	Spain	SK	Slovakia	MK	North Macedonia
FR	France	FI	Finland	NO	Norway
HR	Croatia	SE	Sweden	RS	Serbia
IT	Italy			TR	Turkey

Statistics

(:)	Data not available
(–)	Not applicable or zero

Abbreviations and acronyms

International conventions

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EQF	European Qualification Framework
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education (see the glossary)
ITE	Initial Teacher Education

National abbreviations in their language of origin

AHS	<i>Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule</i>	AT
GCSE	<i>General Certificate of Secondary Education</i>	UK-ENG/WLS/NIR
HAVO	<i>Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs</i>	NL
NMS	<i>Neue Mittelschule</i>	AT
PGCE	<i>Postgraduate Certificate in Education</i>	UK-ENG/WLS/NIR
VMBO	<i>Vorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs</i>	NL
VWO	<i>Vorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs</i>	NL
ZŠ/G	<i>Základní škola/Gymnázium</i>	CZ

CHAPTER 6: TEACHERS' WELL-BEING AT WORK

Teachers' well-being at work has come into focus on the European and national policy agendas. The Council conclusions on 'European teachers and trainers for the future' ⁽¹⁾ underline that teachers' well-being is a key factor for enhancing the attractiveness of the profession: 'The wellbeing of teachers and trainers influences their job satisfaction and enthusiasm for their work, and has an impact on the attractiveness of their profession, and subsequently on their retention in the profession. It is an important factor in quality and performance, correlating with their own motivation and with the motivation and achievements of their learners'. Member States are, therefore, invited to consider the well-being of teachers and their resilience as a key policy area.

Well-being may relate to different aspects of the teaching profession: workload; work environments; working conditions; sense of safety; peer and institutional support; relational aspects with learners, parents, colleagues and other stakeholders involved with the school; and of course, appreciation from the wider community. If these aspects are a source of negative experiences, teachers may find themselves in a state of physical and emotional exhaustion, stress and burnout, and their mental and physical health can be affected. The European Commission's study on policy measures to improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession in Europe highlights stress as one of the factors that make the teaching profession particularly difficult (European Commission, 2013a, p. 175). The OECD (2020, p. 102) underlines that teachers experiencing high levels of stress at work are more likely to report their intention to leave teaching and move to other careers in the five years that follow. There is evidence that teachers' stress can impact the quality of their teaching and the motivation of their students (Fernet et al., 2012; Klusmann et al., 2008). One study found that teachers' stress levels also affected the stress levels of primary students in the morning when they arrived at school (Oberle and Schonert-Reichl, 2016). Some evidence also associates teachers' stress with job satisfaction (Collie, Shapka and Perry, 2012), commitment (Klassen et al., 2013), burnout rates (Betoret, 2009), and teacher attrition (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011).

Working conditions are generally considered a primary driver for well-being (Béteille and Loeb, 2009; French, 1993; Ingersoll, 2001; Ladd, 2011; Moriarty, Edmonds, Blatchford and Martin, 2001). Kyriacou (2001) highlights that teachers' stress should be considered the result of a perceived imbalance between the demands on their work and the resources they have at their disposal. Likewise, McCarthy (2019) underlines that understanding teachers' capacity for coping with stress at work means exploring how they evaluate the balance between such demands and resources. Other authors have underlined the links between student learning outcomes and teachers' stress levels, burnout rate, self-efficacy and coping abilities (Herman, Hickmon-Rosa, Reinke, 2017), the impact of cooperation among teachers on stress levels (Wolgast and Fischer, 2017), the link between accountability policies and higher levels of teacher stress (Ryan et al., 2017), and the importance of the teacher-student relationship (Spilt et al., 2011).

This chapter analyses the experience of stress at work as reported by teachers, and investigates possible sources of stress as well as elements that seem to mitigate stress levels. The first section explores perceived stress levels as reported by teachers in the TALIS 2018 survey. The data reveals that, in some countries, the number of teachers reporting high stress levels should be a matter of concern. This can affect both the attractiveness of the teacher profession, and the overall capacity of education systems to retain good teachers.

The second section analyses the sources of stress as reported by teachers in the survey. Section 3 looks into the links between stress levels and working conditions, working environment and perception of self-efficacy, all elements that – according to the research literature – might play a role in enhancing stress levels or reinforcing coping mechanism among teachers.

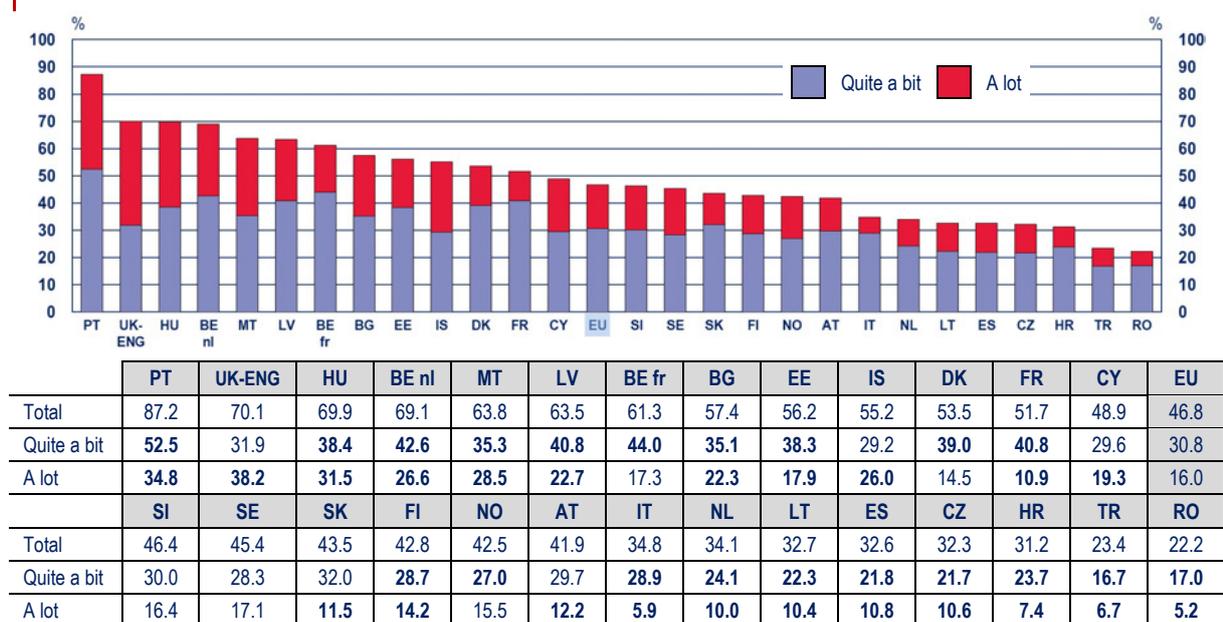
(1) Council conclusions of 26 May 2020 on European teachers and trainers for the future, OJ C 193, 9.6.2020, C 193/16.

The analysis reveals that across Europe many teachers experience stress at work. Evidence seems to indicate that the levels of stress are lower when teachers work in school environments that they perceive as collaborative, when they feel self-confident about motivating students and managing their behaviour, and when they feel they have autonomy in their work. On the contrary, teachers report experiencing more stress when they work in classrooms they perceive as disruptive, work longer hours, and are subject to appraisal as a requirement for career progression.

6.1. Stress levels

TALIS 2018 data reveals that stress is common among European teachers. Figure 6.1 shows that in Europe, almost 50 % of lower secondary school teachers experience stress at work. In 12 education systems ⁽²⁾, more than 50 % of teachers report experiencing stress ‘quite a bit’ or ‘a lot’. In Portugal, almost 90 % of teachers reported being stressed, as did 70 % of teachers in Hungary and the United Kingdom (England). Even more worrying is that in all three countries, the share of teachers experiencing ‘a lot’ of stress is double the EU value. In Belgium (Flemish Community), Malta and Iceland, the share of teachers experiencing ‘a lot’ of stress is 10 percentage points higher than in the EU. At the other end of the spectrum are teachers working in Romania and Turkey, where only one out of five teachers reported experiencing stress at work.

Figure 6.1: Proportion of lower secondary teachers experiencing ‘quite a bit’ or ‘a lot’ of stress at work, 2018



Source: Eurydice, on the basis of TALIS 2018 (see Table 6.1 in Annex II).

Explanatory notes

The Figure is based on teachers’ answers to question 51 ‘In your experience as a teacher at this school, to what extent do the following occur?’ option (a) ‘I experience stress at work’. The possible answers are ‘not at all’, ‘to some extent’, ‘quite a bit’ and ‘a lot’.

The data is arranged in descending order of the total of the two categories ‘quite a bit’ and ‘a lot’.

EU refers to all the European Union countries/regions that participated in the TALIS survey in 2018. It includes UK-ENG.

For categories ‘quite a bit’ and ‘a lot’ statistically significant differences from the EU value are indicated in bold. For the category ‘Total’ statistically significant differences are not calculated.

⁽²⁾ Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Portugal, the United Kingdom (England) and Iceland.

In addition to the general experience of stress at work, the TALIS 2018 questionnaire explores three other dimensions: the impact that working as a teacher has on teachers' mental health, the impact on teachers' physical health, and the balance between work and personal life.

Overall, in Europe, 24 % and 22 % of teachers report that their job has a negative impact on their mental and physical health respectively (see Table 6.1). However, in Belgium (French Community) and Portugal, more than half of teachers consider that their job negatively affects their mental and physical health. Mental health is also a concern for one out of three teachers in Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Latvia and the United Kingdom (England).

The balance between work and personal life is also an important factor when measuring well-being, and can have an impact on the attractiveness of the teaching profession. According to the OECD (2019a, p. 124), the statement 'teaching schedule fit with responsibilities in my personal life' was indicated by a large proportion of teachers as one of the motivations for becoming a teacher, demonstrating that this balance is therefore an important element in choosing a career in teaching. TALIS 2018 data indicates that at EU level, almost 55 % of teachers state that their job leaves them 'quite a bit' or 'a lot' of time for their personal life, which still means that a large proportion of teachers doesn't view the teaching profession's work/personal life balance so positively. Moreover, in the United Kingdom and in Iceland, only one out of four teachers considers that their job leaves them 'quite a bit' or 'a lot' of time for their personal life. The impact of total working hours as a stress factor is further analysed in section 6.3.

6.2. Sources of stress: the role of tasks and responsibilities

The TALIS 2018 survey asked teachers to indicate to what extent a predetermined list of issues could be considered a source of stress. The following paragraphs analyse their answers.

Figure 6.2 shows that, at EU level, lower secondary teachers list 'administrative work' as their main source of stress. Moreover, the data reveals that three of the top four sources of stress are not directly linked with the core tasks of teaching: administrative work, responsibility for students' achievements, and requirements from authorities.

Figure 6.2: Proportion of teachers indicating that the following issues are a source of 'quite a bit' or 'a lot' of stress, lower secondary education, EU level, 2018



Source: Eurydice, on the basis of TALIS 2018 (see Table 6.2 in Annex II).

Explanatory notes

The Figure is based on teachers' answers to question 52 'Thinking about your job at this school, to what extent are the following sources of stress in your work?'. Answers 'quite a bit' and 'a lot' are grouped together.

EU refers to all the European Union countries/regions that participated in the TALIS survey in 2018. It includes UK-ENG.

The perception that administrative work is a source of stress varies across countries (see Table 6.2 in Annex II). While in Estonia and Finland only one out of three teachers considers this a source of stress, more than two thirds do so in Belgium (Flemish Community) and Portugal. It is not surprising that in those countries where teachers reported spending more time on administrative tasks (see Table 1.4 in Annex II), they also indicated, on average, higher levels of stress due to administrative tasks.

At EU level, 'Having too much marking' is the second highest source of stress that teachers indicated. Also, in countries where teachers reported spending more time on marking (see Table 1.4 in Annex II), they also indicated, on average, higher levels of stress due to having too much marking.

Scholars have pointed to test-based accountability policies as one of the predictors of teachers' stress and job dissatisfaction (Ryan et al., 2017; von der Embse et al., 2016a; von der Embse et al., 2016b). 'Being held responsible for students' achievement' is the third most signalled source of stress. In Finland and Norway, however, only one out of five teachers indicates this is a source of 'quite a bit' or 'a lot' of stress.

'Keeping up with changing requirements from authorities' is the fourth most reported source of stress. In the Netherlands, fewer than 20 % of teachers are concerned by this, while in France, Malta, Lithuania and Portugal more than 60 % of teachers experience stress due to changing requirements from authorities.

The remaining causes of stress listed in Figure 6.2 are more directly linked to teachers' work. These are either core tasks related to teaching (e.g. lesson preparation), or part of teachers' relational tasks (e.g. maintaining classroom discipline, addressing parent or guardian concerns). Some of these, as well as broader issues linked to school climate, are examined in the following analyses.

6.3. Sources of stress: the impact of systemic elements and working contexts

In addition to the sources of stress listed in Figure 6.2, other factors might contribute to increasing or lowering teachers' experience of stress. The following analysis explores the impact of systemic elements, such as career models, as well as perceptions and experiences of teachers, such as collaborative school climate and perception of self-efficacy. It uses three different regression models further explained below.

The analysis is based on a stress index score, which combines the answers given by teachers to all four items related to stress included in the survey ⁽³⁾:

1. 'I experience stress in my work';
2. 'My job leaves me time for my personal life';
3. 'My job negatively impacts my mental health'; and
4. 'My job negatively impacts my physical health'.

⁽³⁾ TALIS Teacher questionnaire 2018, question 51.

Each question has four answer categories, which were assigned values from 1 to 4: 'Not at all' (1), 'To some extent' (2), 'Quite a bit' (3) and 'A lot' (4). The stress index score therefore has a minimum value of 4 and a maximum value of 16. Figure 6.3 shows the average values of the stress index score by country. At EU level, the average score is 8.6. The mean score of the stress index in France, Slovakia and Sweden is close to this average. Teachers in Romania indicated the lowest levels of stress (7.6 points), while teachers in Portugal scored the highest (11 points).

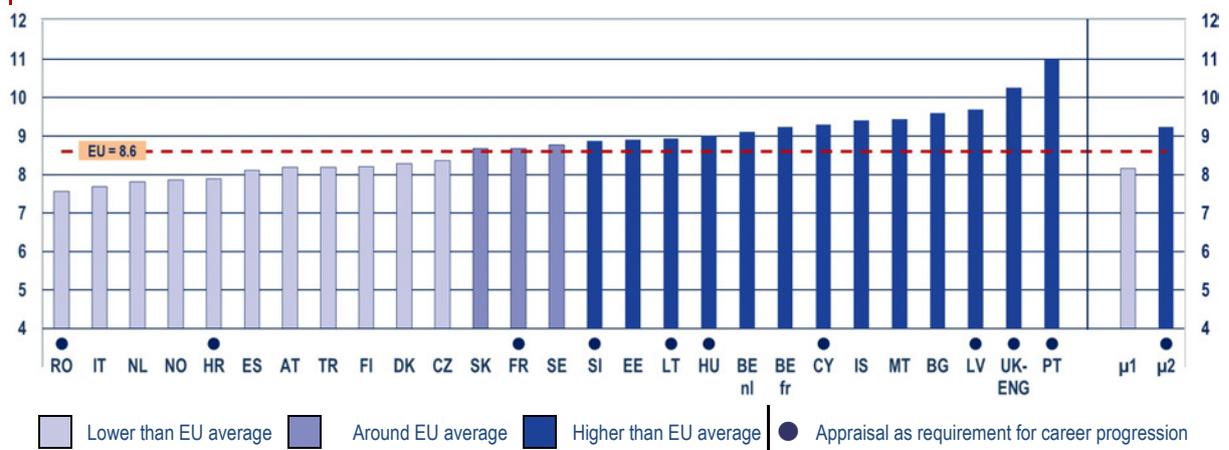
The impact of systemic elements: career models, summative appraisal and continuing professional development (CPD)

Chapter 1 looked at career models and the role played by summative appraisal and CPD in career progression processes. The following analysis looks into possible links between such systemic elements and stress levels. Regression analyses have been run using the stress index score as a dependent variable and three different systemic elements as independent variables. These are: career model (single-level or multi-level – see Figure 1.12); appraisal as a requirement for career progression (see Figure 1.13); and CPD as a requirement for career progression (see Figure 1.13).

Two systemic variables have a statistically significant impact on stress levels (see Annex II Table 6.4). Appraisal as a requirement for career progression is associated with an increase in the stress index score (1.26; S.E. 0.04). Teachers in countries where CPD is a requirement for career progression report, on average, lower stress levels (-0.53; S.E. 0.04). Changes in teacher reported stress and career structures is minor (-0.07; S.E. 0.04) and this difference is statistically not significant. Therefore, there is no substantial difference in stress levels reported by teachers working in systems with multi-level career models and those working in single-level career environments.

Figure 6.3 illustrates the relationship between stress levels and appraisal as a requirement for career progression (see also Figure 1.13). The figure compares mean scores of the stress index by country and indicates which systems have teacher appraisal as a requirement for career progression. The data reveals that, on average, teachers report higher levels of stress in those countries where appraisal is a formal requirement for career progression (μ_2 mean 9.2; S.E. 0.03). In countries with no such requirement, teachers' stress levels, on average, were lower (μ_1 mean 8.2; S.E. 0.02) ⁽⁴⁾.

Figure 6.3: Teachers' stress index score versus appraisal as a requirement for career progression, lower secondary education, 2018



Source: Eurydice, on the basis of Eurydice and TALIS 2018 (see Table 6.3 in Annex II).

⁽⁴⁾ Difference between μ_1 and μ_2 : 1.08; S.E. 0.04.

Data (Figure 6.3)

EU	RO	IT	NL	NO	HR	ES	AT	TR	FI	DK	CZ	SK	FR	SE
8.6	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.9	8.1	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.7	8.7	8.8
SI	EE	LT	HU	BE nl	BE fr	CY	IS	MT	BG	LV	UK-ENG	PT	μ1	μ2
8.9	8.9	8.9	9.0	9.1	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.4	9.6	9.7	10.3	11.0	8.2	9.2

Source: Eurydice, on the basis of Eurydice and TALIS 2018 (see Table 6.3 in Annex II).

Explanatory notes

The Figure is based on teachers' answers to question 51 'In your experience as a teacher at this school, to what extent do the following occur?', option (a) 'I experience stress in my work', option (b) 'My job leaves me time for my personal life', option (c) 'My job negatively impacts my mental health', option (d) 'My job negatively impacts my physical health'.

The data is arranged in ascending order of the stress index score. The intensity of the bar colour and the use of **bold** in the table below the figure indicate statistically significant differences from the EU average.

'Appraisal as requirement for career progression' shows the top-level regulations, see Figure 1.13.

μ1=average for countries that do not have 'Appraisal as requirement for career progression'. μ2=average for countries that do have 'Appraisal as requirement for career progression'.

EU refers to all the European Union countries/regions that participated in the TALIS survey in 2018. It includes UK-ENG.

While only two countries (Croatia and Romania) among those with an average stress score below the EU mean have appraisal as a requirement for career progression, seven countries (Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia and the United Kingdom (England)) which have appraisal as a requirement have a mean score higher than the EU average.

The impact of context: working conditions, school and classroom climate, and self-perception

A second model for regression analyses has been developed using a mixture of contextual elements encompassing teachers' working conditions, the environment in which they work, and the perception of their self-efficacy.

As highlighted in the introduction to this chapter, working conditions are generally considered a primary driver for well-being (Béteille and Loeb, 2009; French, 1993; Ingersoll, 2001; Ladd, 2011; Moriarty, Edmonds, Blatchford and Martin, 2001). The regression model includes three elements for this first dimension: working time, years of experience, and being employed on a permanent contract.

Evidence from empirical research also points to contextual elements, such as student behaviour (Collie et al., 2012; Geving, 2007; Lewis, Roache and Romi, 2011; Pang, 2012), school climate (Fernet et al., 2012; Greyson and Alvarez, 2008; Wolgast and Fischer, 2017), and teachers' sense of autonomy (Pearson and Moomaw, 2005; Tuettemann and Punch, 1992) as factors that influence the well-being of teachers at work. Therefore, the regression model includes these three aspects through the following elements: the perception of working in a disruptive classroom, the perception of working in a collaborative school, and how autonomous teachers consider themselves in their job.

The third dimension considered in the regression analyses is linked to teachers' self-perception of their abilities. Several scholars have indicated that teacher self-efficacy is positively correlated with job satisfaction and engagement (Collie et al, 2012; Gilbert, Adesope and Schroeder, 2014; Klassen and Chiu, 2010; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2014) and negatively correlated with work-related stress and burnout (Brouwers and Tomic, 2000; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010, 2014). Bandura (2006) considers the perception of self-efficacy to be a central mechanism of human agency. Beliefs in one's own self-efficacy influence the way people see contextual opportunities and challenges, influencing behaviours, choices, and the energy, determination and resilience people will put into pursuing their goals when confronted with obstacles. The confidence that teachers have in their abilities as professionals might, therefore, play a role in the stress they experience: a self-confident teacher might have lower levels of stress, while a teacher who is not as confident might experience the different facets of his or her work

in a more stressful way. This might also be a reciprocal relation, with highly-stressed teachers losing self-confidence (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2017). Teaching today is not only about the act of facilitating knowledge and skills, although this remains the main purpose of a teacher's job. It is also about managing a group of learners and motivating them to be confident, curious and autonomous. Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2001) consider teachers' self-efficacy as a self-evaluation of their own abilities to reach desired outcomes in student engagement and learning, even when confronted with difficult or unmotivated students. Therefore, the regression analyses have been conducted using three variables that deal with these three aspects: self-efficacy in instructional abilities, management of student behaviour and ability to motivate students.

Table 6.5 in Annex II provides detailed information on the construction of each independent variable.

Figure 6.4 summarises the results of the multivariate regression analyses performed on these variables for each European education system participating in TALIS 2018. The numbers in the axes show in how many education systems a particular variable has a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable (the stress index). The maximum number (27) is reached when an independent variable has a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) impact on the stress index score in all education systems. The effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable is observed under control of all other factors included in the regression.

There is certain variation in the model fit across the countries analysed. In the United Kingdom (England), the proportion of explained variance is almost 20 % ($RSQ=0.19$), while in Denmark and Malta it is 10 % ($RSQ=0.096$ and 0.098 respectively). In addition, the multivariate regression with all variables listed in Figure 6.4 was performed by pooling all participating EU education systems. At EU level, the model with nine independent variables explains 16 % of variance in stress levels ($RSQ=0.16$).

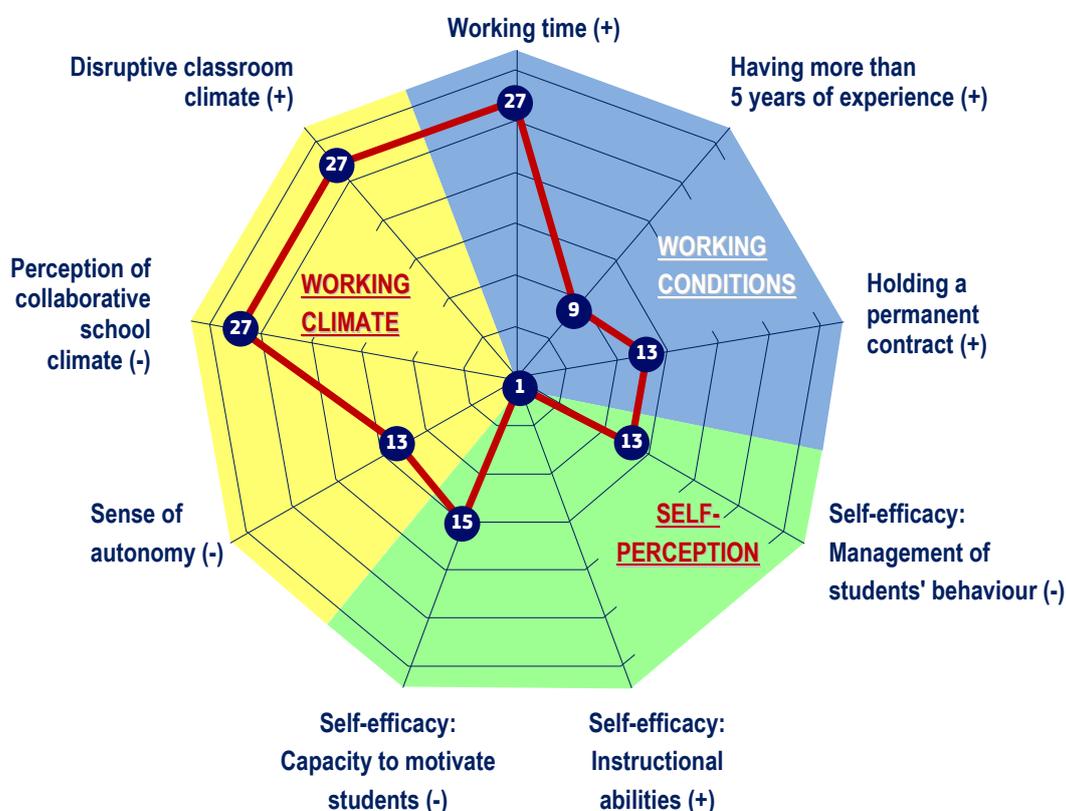
Working climate:

disruptive classrooms, collaborative school environment and sense of autonomy

The results highlight the importance of the working environment. The multivariate regression analyses show that in all 27 education systems considered, teachers working in disruptive classrooms and/or in schools with perceived low levels of collaboration among teachers are more likely to indicate higher levels of stress. At EU level, the change in the mean stress index score is 1.00 point (S.E. 0.04) if teachers consider the classroom environment disruptive, and -1.17 points (S.E. 0.05) if teachers consider the school environment collaborative. Moreover, teachers experiencing more autonomy in their work are more likely to indicate lower levels of stress. At EU level, the mean in the stress index score changes by -0.81 point (S.E. 0.11) when teachers consider themselves more autonomous in their work. Moreover, at national level, this independent variable shows statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) values in 13 education systems ⁽⁵⁾. These results would seem to indicate that school and classroom climate, as well as the sense of autonomy that teachers have in their work, can play an important role in the well-being of teachers. Policies aimed at enhancing the well-being of teachers could, therefore, seek to reinforce the role of teamwork and collaboration within schools, support teachers in developing social and interpersonal competences, and develop teachers' sense of autonomy in their work.

⁽⁵⁾ In the following 13 education system the stress index score diminishes: Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Bulgaria, Spain, France, Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Austria, Portugal, United Kingdom (England) and Turkey. In Finland, the stress index score is higher.

Figure 6.4: Number of countries/regions where selected aspects of lower secondary teachers' professional life have a statistically significant impact on the stress index score, 2018



Source: Eurydice, on the basis of TALIS 2018 (see Table 6.5 in Annex II).

EU level regression results

	EU β	S.E.		EU β	S.E.
Working time	0.05	(0.00)	Perception of sense of autonomy	-0.81	(0.11)
Having more than 5 years of experience	0.19	(0.06)	Perception of collaborative school climate	-1.17	(0.05)
Holding a permanent employment	0.51	(0.06)	Perception of disruptive classroom climate	1.00	(0.04)
Perception of self-efficacy: Management of students' behaviour	-0.57	(0.06)			
Perception of self-efficacy: Instructional abilities	-0.14	(0.08)			
Perception of self-efficacy: Capacity to motivate students	-0.10	(0.05)			

Explanatory notes

The figure shows the number of countries in which the impact of the independent variable is statistically significant on the dependent variable (stress index score – see Figure 1.18). The symbol '+' refers to a positive relation, while the symbol '-' refers to a negative relation. The categories 'Working time', 'Having more than 5 years of experience', 'Holding a permanent employment', 'Disruptive classroom climate' and 'Self-efficacy: Instructional abilities' are positively related to higher stress levels (e.g. the more working hours, the more teachers express higher levels of stress). The categories 'Self-efficacy: Management of students' behaviour', 'Self-efficacy: Capacity to motivate students', 'Sense of autonomy' and 'Collaborative school climate' are negatively related to stress levels (i.e. the higher the levels of autonomy, the more teachers express lower levels of stress).

'Sense of autonomy' is negatively related with the stress index score in 13 countries/regions and positively related in one country (Finland).

EU refers to all the European Union countries/regions that participated in the TALIS survey in 2018. It includes UK-ENG.

Statistically significant results at EU level are indicated in bold.

Working conditions: working hours, experience and employment contract

Within the category of working conditions, a key factor is working time. The likelihood of teachers to indicate higher levels of stress if their working hours are longer is statistically significant in all (27) education systems analysed. At EU level, the mean score in the stress index score increases by 0.05 points (S.E. 0.00) for each additional hour teachers declare to be working. This is not surprising: the more hours teachers work, the more teachers report experiencing stress at work. This is valid in all education systems despite differences in working hours, as seen in section 1.2.2. The other two variables linked to working conditions, years of experience and permanent employment show statistically significant results in nine ⁽⁶⁾ and 13 ⁽⁷⁾ education systems respectively. At EU level, the change in the mean score in the stress level index is statistically significant for both teachers with more than five years of experience (0.19; S.E. 0.06) and teachers holding a permanent employment (0.51; S.E. 0.06). The results suggest that experienced teachers tend to report higher levels of stress compared to novice teachers. In Bulgaria and Portugal, the stress index score of teachers with more than five years of working experience changes by +1.10 (S.E. 0.16) and +1.09 (S.E. 0.25) respectively. Similarly, all other variables being the same, teachers in permanent employment indicate higher levels of stress in half of the education systems analysed.

Self-perception: managing students' behaviour, motivating students, and instructional abilities

Regarding the third dimension, the two elements that most impact the change in the stress index score are the perception of teachers' own abilities in managing student behaviour and in motivating students. At EU level, the stress index mean score diminishes by 0.57 points (S.E. 0.06) when teachers feel confident about managing student behaviour, and by 0.10 (S.E. 0.05) when teachers feel confident about motivating students. As far as these two independent variables are concerned the change in the stress index score is statistically significant in 13 ⁽⁸⁾ and 15 ⁽⁹⁾ education systems respectively. Surprisingly, the perception of instructional self-efficacy as a factor that impacts stress levels is not statistically significant at EU level. Only in one country (the Netherlands: 0.89; S.E. 0.36) is the relationship positive, with teachers who indicate higher levels of self-confidence in their teaching abilities also reporting higher levels of stress.

These results seem to emphasise that teachers' self-confidence in their social competences is an important dimension for their work and well-being. Social competences enable teachers to motivate their students to engage in classroom discussions and provide a learning environment in which everyone is able to contribute freely and critically (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017b, p. 136). Feeling self-confident in managing student behaviour as well as in inspiring and engaging students in learning might have a positive impact on teachers' well-being, which in turn would reduce burnout, attrition and disengagement. There are probably several possible sources of support, starting with initial teacher education and CPD providers, as well as school support structures that focus on social and interpersonal competences.

⁽⁶⁾ Bulgaria, Spain, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, Portugal and Slovakia.

⁽⁷⁾ Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden and Iceland.

⁽⁸⁾ Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Bulgaria, Czechia, Spain, France, Croatia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Iceland and Turkey.

⁽⁹⁾ Belgium (French Community), Czechia, Estonia, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Turkey.

Combining systemic and contextual elements

Finally, in addition to the two models analysed above, a third model integrates all independent variables discussed in this section, both systemic and contextual, and is run at EU level. Full information and results of the regression analyses are provided in Table 6.6 in Annex II.

In this final model, at EU level, all independent variables have a statistically significant impact on the stress index score, except the perception of instructional self-efficacy. There are however, some variations both in the systemic dimension and in the contextual one.

As far as systemic elements are concerned, teachers in countries with a multi-level career structure report lower levels of stress (-0.12; S.E. 0.03) and the impact of this independent variable is statistically significant⁽¹⁰⁾. As far as summative appraisal and CPD are concerned, the change in the stress index score is 1.06 (S.E. 0.04) and -0.51 (S.E. 0.04) respectively⁽¹¹⁾, and both variables have a statistically significant impact.

As far as contextual elements are concerned, when these are combined with systemic elements, the impact of some independent variables is higher. This is the case for years of experience, with an overall higher impact of experience on the stress index score (0.32; S.E. 0.06)⁽¹²⁾; and on two dimensions of self-efficacy: management of student behaviour (-0.61; S.E. 0.06) and capacity to motivate students (-0.15 S.E. 0.05)⁽¹³⁾. Moreover, the perception of working in a school with a collaborative climate and the perception of working in a disruptive classroom remain the two elements that most greatly impact the changes in the stress index score (respectively -1.14; S.E. 0.04 and 1.06; S.E. 0.04)⁽¹⁴⁾.

6.4. Conclusions

The Council conclusions on 'European teachers and trainers for the future'⁽¹⁵⁾ consider teachers' well-being a key factor for enhancing the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

At EU level, almost 50 % of teachers report experiencing 'quite a bit' or 'a lot' of stress at work. In Hungary, Portugal and the United Kingdom (England), the share of teachers experiencing 'a lot' of stress at work is double the EU value. When asked about stress factors, teachers mostly point to the burden of administrative tasks, excessive marking, being held responsible for students' achievements and keeping up with changing requirements from authorities. Policies on accountability and administrative requirements, as well as the pace and manner of reforms in education could, therefore, play a role in teachers' experience of stress at work.

Several systemic and contextual factors seem to be related to teachers' stress levels. Teachers who work longer hours reported higher levels of stress, as did teachers with more experience and teachers employed on permanent contracts.

In addition, the findings indicate that teachers report higher levels of stress if they are working in classrooms they consider disruptive, or when they feel less self-confident about managing student behaviour or in motivating students. On the other hand, teachers report lower levels of stress when they consider their school environment to be collaborative and when they believe they have autonomy in their job.

⁽¹⁰⁾ In the first model the impact of career models is statistically not significant (-0.07; S.E. 0.03).

⁽¹¹⁾ In the first model the change in the stress index score is 1.26 (S.E. 0.04) and -0.53 (S.E. 0.04) respectively.

⁽¹²⁾ In the second model the change in the stress index score is 0.19 (S.E. 0.06).

⁽¹³⁾ In the second model the change in the stress index score is - 0.57 (S.E. 0.06) and -0.10 (S.E. 0.05) respectively.

⁽¹⁴⁾ In the second model the change in the stress index score is -1.17 points (S.E. 0.05) and 1.00 point (S.E. 0.04) respectively.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Council conclusions of 26 May 2020 on European teachers and trainers for the future, OJ C 193, 9.6.2020.

Finally, teachers working in education systems where appraisal is a pre-condition for career progression report higher levels of stress, while teachers working in systems where CPD is a pre-condition for career progression report lower levels of stress.

These results seem to point to different factors that could be related to teachers' experience of stress at work, confirming several of the findings that other scholars have investigated. At systemic level, authorities could analyse their policies on the accountability of teachers, and how these contribute to teachers' workload, pressure and lower levels of well-being. Similarly, the role, weight and dynamics of appraisal and CPD for career progression should be further analysed considering the relation that these have to levels of perceived stress. Authorities could focus on policies that enhance teachers' social competences, enable them to develop a collaborative culture within schools, and improve self-confidence in their professional relations with peers and students. Such actions could aim to develop support structures, ITE and CPD programmes that can play a role both at school and teacher level.

ANNEXES

Annex II: Statistical tables

Open the Excel file [Statistical Annex](#)

Chapter 6: Teachers' Well-being at Work

Table 6.1:	Proportion of lower secondary teachers reporting on their experience of stress at work, balance between their job and personal life, and impact of the job on their mental and physical health, by intensity, 2018	Figure 6.1
Table 6.2:	Proportion of lower secondary teachers reporting on a selected number of issues as a source of stress, 2018	Figure 6.2
Table 6.3:	Teachers' mean stress index score, 2018	Figure 6.3
Table 6.4:	Impact of selected Eurydice indicators on the stress index score, lower secondary education, EU level, 2018	
Table 6.5:	Impact of selected aspects of teachers' professional life on the stress index score, regression analyses, lower secondary education, 2018	Figure 6.4
Table 6.6:	Impact of selected Eurydice indicators and aspects of teachers' professional life on the stress index score, regression analyses, lower secondary education, EU level, 2018	

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Teachers in Europe

Careers, Development and Well-being

This report analyses key aspects of the professional life of lower secondary teachers (ISCED 2) across Europe. It is based on qualitative Eurydice data from national policies and legislation, and quantitative data from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) on practices and perceptions of teachers and school heads.

Connecting these two data sources, the analysis aims to illustrate how national policies and regulations may contribute to making the teaching profession more attractive. It examines ways teachers receive their initial education, and policies that may influence the take up of continuing professional development. Among other issues, the report investigates working conditions, career prospects and teachers' well-being at work. It also explores to what extent teacher evaluation is used to provide formative feedback, and ways to encourage teachers to travel abroad for learning and working. The challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the shift to distance teaching and learning, are briefly addressed.

The report covers all 27 EU Member States, as well as the United Kingdom, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey. The reference years are 2018-2020.

The Eurydice network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides evidence-based information and descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is coordinated by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. For more information about Eurydice, see <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/>

