

## Towards a better integration of beginning teachers into their profession

### Introduction

The Council of Education Ministers, in the *Council conclusions of 26 November 2009 on the professional development of teachers and school leaders*, reached agreement on several areas as follows:

*In view of the increasing demands placed upon them and the growing complexity of their roles, teachers need access to effective personal and professional support throughout their careers, and particularly during the time they first enter the profession.*

*[...]*

*In particular, efforts should be made to ensure that:*

- All newly qualified teachers receive sufficient and effective support and guidance during the first few years of their careers;*
- A reflective approach is promoted, whereby both newly qualified and more experienced teachers are encouraged continuously to review their work individually and collectively.*

Education Ministers have additionally invited Member States to:

- Make appropriate provision for all new teachers to participate in a programme of induction offering both professional and personal support during their first years in a teaching post.*

Ministers have additionally invited the Commission to:

- Present practical information for policymakers on developing structured induction programmes for all new teachers, together with examples of measures that can be taken to implement or improve such programmes.*

### Induction programmes for beginning teachers

Following completion of their initial teacher education, beginning teachers entering into the teaching profession should be able to rely on an induction phase of initiation into the profession. This induction phase should reinforce coherence with initial training and prepare teachers to participate in continuous professional training throughout their careers. A professional induction programme is therefore the first stage in the continuous professional development of teachers.



The specific objectives of this induction phase for beginning teachers may vary to a large degree from one country to another, but may include:

- A reduction in teacher drop-out rates;
- An improvement in the quality of teaching by beginning teachers;
- Professional, social and emotional support;
- Support for the learning culture in schools;
- Feedback of information to teacher education institutes.

Three dimensions for professional induction programmes are highlighted: the professional dimension, the social dimension and the personal/emotional dimension. Coherent professional induction programmes should focus on these three dimensions.

A coherent and structured induction programme should ideally consist of upon four interlocking systems:

- A mentoring system;
- A peer support system;
- An expert support system;
- A self-reflection system.

Some preconditions need to be fulfilled in order to ensure the success of professional induction programmes for beginning teachers. These relate to financial support, the clarity of roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, cooperation between the various elements in the system, a school culture focused on learning, and quality management.

The successful implementation of professional induction programmes for beginning teachers additionally needs a suitable balance between the different factors such as the amount of time invested, the establishment of partnerships, involvement of school leaders, return on investment (notably on the initial and continuous training), analysis of requirements, implementation of resources, etc.

### **Questions**

- **What is the experience of your own country regarding support for beginning teachers?**
- **What activities are planned in your own country in response to the invitation in the Council Conclusions of 26 November 2009 concerning professional induction programmes for beginning teachers?**

