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## **SPECIFIC FEATURES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHERS' TRAINING IN EUROPE**

Education is deeply rooted in the social and political context, responding to the changes taking place in society and also helping to shape the pattern of change. The training of teachers has therefore a strategic role in preparing Europe's education systems to meet all the challenges and make future teachers respondent to those challenges. Language teachers have the particular task of developing their students' knowledge and skills in the domain of languages and cultures, in other words to enable their students to understand the world around them, to communicate across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Secondary foreign language teachers are usually trained at universities or teacher training colleges. Within universities, training is normally the combined responsibility of two academic units: on the one hand Faculties or Departments of Education and on the other hand Faculties or Departments of Foreign Languages. There is a range of different training options available across Europe. Courses may be either in the first cycle of higher education (undergraduate or equivalent) or in the second cycle (postgraduate or equivalent). In several countries both alternatives exist or a distinction is made between training for teaching at upper and lower secondary level. Undergraduate teacher training generally lasts for four or five years, although three-year training programmes also exist in Austria and Belgium. Postgraduate teacher training takes between one and two years and follows on from three or four-year undergraduate first degree studies, in which language study is usually the main component.

A secondary school leaver's certificate is necessary for access to higher education in all countries. Many institutions offering undergraduate courses to prospective teachers expect them to sit an entrance examination. In countries with postgraduate provision, it is usual for the student to hold a first degree in the foreign language to be taught, in order to be granted access to the course [1, p.17].

All secondary school language teachers are required to acquire a body of academic knowledge in the course of their studies in higher education. At the same time, most countries and institutions stress the importance of integrating the theoretical and practical components of training. These include the organisation of school placements in such a way to ensure that trainees have opportunities to reflect on the application of theoretical concepts in practical situations. Partnership between schools and higher education institutions appear particularly strong in Finland, Hungary, Lithuania and the UK. In Hungary, certain schools specialise in taking students for teaching practice and in Austria and Finland there are special schools for this purpose, which are attached to and run by the teacher training colleges (Austria) or universities (Finland) [1, p.26].

In such a way, language teacher's training is a complex task, which requires teachers to be trained in a wide range of methods and approaches to be able to share their own ideas and practices with others. Teacher trainers, educationalists and decision makers must identify the wider needs of society and establish institutional and organisational frameworks that will improve the way the needs of teachers and students can be met.

### **Literature**

1. Kelly M. The Training of Teachers of a Foreign Language: Developments in Europe: A Report to the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture / Michael Kelly, Michael Grenfield. – Southampton, 2012. – 85 p.