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EUROPEAN UNION EDUCATION POLICIES AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IN TURKEY

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Biodata

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Abstract

Education system is seen as a key element which triggers and initiates all kind of changes in the social systems. Significant social, economic, political, cultural and technological achievements have been gained in the societies which have made continuing development and change in their education system part of their culture. Educational systems always keep themselves dynamic by evaluating national and global changes as a crucial input while maintaining the transformation. Educational systems' producing outputs affecting the other systems as a value by internalizing global changes makes necessary the continuing professional development of teachers, which are the most significant elements of the system. Continuing professional development of teachers become crucial within the scope of information-based economy or more generally the concept of lifelong learning, one of the most important value in the information society. In line with the changes in the duties of educational system, professional development, which contains pre-service and in-service training, to provide teachers needed knowledge, ability and attitudes have been discussed intensively in EU educational policies as in the many other countries. Turkey have tried to take an active role in the global and developing world. The most important elements in this effort are teachers who are the most crucial actors of educational systems. For this reason, in the EU negotiation process, to keep up with educational norms, as a requirement of harmonization process in the educational system, it is necessary to examine existing practices in Turkey by determining educational policies in terms of continuing Professional development of teachers. The aim of the study is to evaluate the existing applications in the Turkish Educational System in accordance with European Union policies in terms of continuing professional development of teachers.

Keywords: teacher' professional development, EU teacher education policies, Turkish teacher education policies

1. Introduction

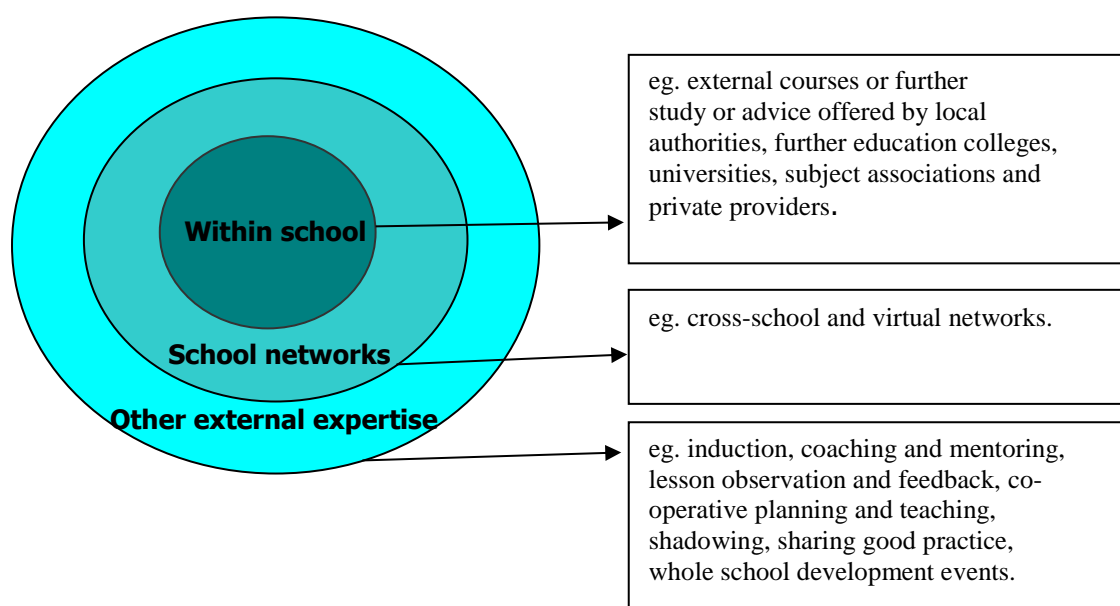
Rapid changes, requirements for high standards, efforts for enhancing quality have made skills development of teachers compulsory through professional development. In service training practices which were entitled as in-service training, have been defined as continuing professional development (CPD) nowadays (Gray, 2005, p. 5). Continuing professional development consists of reflective activities that are designed to improve knowledge, attitudes and skills of individuals. Supporting individual needs is also crucial as well as developing professional practices on the basis of continuing professional development (TDA, 2008, p. 4).

Continuing professional development process is closely consistent with pre-service education, novice teacher education, in-service training and advanced educational

components. Continuing professional development is also related with educational innovations (like school development) and educational research.

No matter how qualified pre-service education which teachers get, it wouldn't be enough to cope with the problems that they may encounter during their professional carrier. So educational systems try to supply opportunities on continuing professional development in order to sustain high standards in education and hold well qualified teacher labor force (OECD, 2009, p. 49). Accordingly, there are so many facilities for continuing professional development of teachers in educational systems. As it is shown in Figure 1, there are different facilities on continuing professional development of teachers (Gray, 2005, s. 9).

Figure 1. *Sources of continuing professional development of teachers*



(Derived from TDA, 2008, p.4)

Continuing professional development of teachers come in to prominence with the frame of the concept of lifelong learning that is one of the basic value of knowledge society in general or knowledge-based economy. Knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers required for the changing tasks in educational system and continuing professional development that includes pre-service and in-service training accordingly are discussed in detail in European Union educational policies as well as in other countries.

While it is not regarded as necessity in most of the countries, continuing professional development is limited in different time limits in some of the countries. According to PISA 2000 research, %40 of the teachers have attended professional development programs. Most of the countries have indicated that they have difficulties in improving skills of teachers (ETUCE VE CSEE, 2008, p. 44). In OECD (2009, p. 49) report it is asserted that %89 of teachers who attended TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) study in 23 countries stated that they attended professional development activity at least one day in last 18 months. However, attending rates of teachers to professional development activities is not easy to scale and analyze exactly. Because continuing professional development includes too many different activities both formal and informal.

In the research carried out by ETUCE in 2006 it is reported that more than half of the institutions are not satisfied with the quality and variety of topics presented in both in-service training and postgraduate education. For continuing professional development of teachers it is

crucial to focus on quality and content of education as well as focusing on rights of teachers to benefit from postgraduate education and in service training. Continuing professional development should be constituted upon not only for the needs of systems and schools but also for individual needs of teachers (ETUCE VE CSEE, 2008, p. 44).

Turkey tries to undertake an effective role in the process of globalizing and rapidly changing world. One of the most important factor for this effort is teachers who have a key role in educational system. Hence, it seems compulsory that education and training policies for continuing professional development in EU should be examined and implementations in Turkey should be evaluated within this context because of the negotiation process requirements with EU. The aim of the study is to define general aims and policies of practices in EU related with continuing professional development of teachers and reveal general view of the studies in Turkish Educational System accordingly.

2. European Union Policy Related to Continuing Professional Development of Teachers

The main aims of the EU policies are to encourage the citizens of member countries to mutual understanding, to construct education in line with European education insight and educational identity, to train students and teachers, to insert the Union to all kinds of issues related to technology and higher education (Karluk, 1996, p. 345). In line with this approach, restrictive and mutual educational policies are not determined; however extensive education programs and projects are conducted for the purpose of ensuring co-operation and interdependency among EU countries (Barçkin, 2002, p. 31).

Council and Parliament decisions of EU related to “Improving Quality Evaluation School Education” (2001), which direct education in general and direct teacher education in particular, and “Promoting Key Competencies for Life-Long Learning” (2006) are existing. Agreements of Education Council such as “Improving the Efficiency and Equality of Education and Training Systems” (2006), “Improving the Quality of Teacher Education” (2007), “Preparing Young People for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Co-operation on Schools” (2008) are also existing. These developments reveal that educational systems in general, schools in particular have a crucial role for achieving Lisbon aims intended for economic growth, social integration and environmental sustainability (Scheerens, 2010, p. 11).

Within the scope of Maastricht Treaty, signed on 7 February 1992, objectives directing Educational Action Programs can be summarized under three sub-titles (Ibanez-Martin and Jover, 2002, p. 41):

- Improving the dimension of Europe
- Enhancing mobility, exchange and co-operation
- Encouraging academic recognition and the exchange of knowledge

At Lisbon Europe Council meeting, it has been stated that EU is in the process of a crucial change derived from globalization and knowledge-based economy. Council considers the modernization of educational and social systems of Europe to overcome the problems of globalization necessary (Livingston, 2003, p. 587).

EU focuses on high quality training as the main precondition of education and training. It defines the tasks of the school as globalization, innovativeness, creativity, providing competencies required for complicated environments dominated by entrepreneurship, ensuring commitment besides ensuring knowledge (European Commission, 2011, p. 2). Teachers are acknowledged as one of the most crucial actors of transformation at educational systems and schools. Therefore, continuing professional development of teachers, starting

from the pre-service training of teachers and continues along their professional careers, are essential for the transformation of educational systems and development of European Dimension.

Role of teachers and the importance of their continuing professional development in the process of building “Knowledge Europe” are frequently emphasized by Europe Commission, Ministers of Educations of member countries and many pedagogues. Acceptance of the education and training of teachers as one of 16 indicators in the report called “Quality of School education” could be one of the important developments on continuing professional development of teachers in EU (Europe Commission, 2002). It is stated in the report that there exist inevitable and unique changes in the roles of teachers. Accordingly, continuing professional development of teachers is a primary issue now and in the long-term.

In the report, issued by the Commission in 2003 it is emphasized that the change in roles of teachers is necessary change in European communities in which active citizenship practices shaped by bigger social integration are existing. The factors causing the change in the roles of teachers are social changes, number of students, changes in the educational environment, professionalization of teaching job increasingly, building a common frame for competencies and qualifications.

Europe Commission has declared “trainers and their training” as one of the 15 indicators of evaluating participation in lifelong learning (European Commission, 2002). Participation rate of teachers and trainers in continuing professional development activities has been defined as one of the indicators of realization of work program called “Education and Training 2010”. Teaching profession is not seen as a profession which can be maintained with the knowledge obtained only during pre-service training. Therefore, teacher education has been seen as a field in which lifelong learning is embedded, knowledge increases and new learning never ends. Accordingly, continuing professional development of teachers and the concept of lifelong learning are examined integrative. In the context of lifelong learning, teaching profession has the quality of continuity including pre-service training, internship and continuing professional development each of which is interconnected and complementary.

Policies related to continuing development of teacher competencies have been adopted with European Parliament resolution of 23 September 2008 on “Improving the Quality of Teacher Education”. In line with these policies, issues such as improving internship practices of teachers, building networks to share knowledge, supporting teacher mobility, improving the skills of using information and communication Technologies, enhancing language competencies, developing the understanding of European citizenship have been given priority (TED, 2009, p. 43).

When EU policies related to continuing professional development of teachers are evaluated as a whole, it is seen that prominent factors are as following:

- accepting continuing professional development of teachers as the most crucial component of economic growth,
- structuring continuing professional development as an integrative component of teacher education,
- accepting it as an individual motivator as well as an external need,
- balancing needs of schools and interests of teachers,
- making all of continuing professional development opportunities inside the school or outside of the school accessible for everybody and supporting teacher mobility,
- enhancing applied continuing professional development practices in terms of quantity and evaluating quality dimension of them,

- improving the usage of European citizenship and its values, language and information-communication skills through continuing professional development activities.

While carrying out the practices especially for continuing professional development, co-operation among Ministries of Education, schools, teacher training institutions, private educational institutions and all the other stakeholders; usage of information and communication technologies as reflection of lifelong learning understanding and accepting continuing professional development practices of teachers as both financial gain in their careers and one of the career development tools are taken into consideration.

3. Teachers' Continuing Professional Development in Turkey

Since the founding years of the republic, in order to meet the societies' educational requirements, policies for quantity have been held at the forefront while the quality has been considered crucial during pre-service training in Turkish Educational System. Since the year of 1998 when the Turkish education was restructured and especially after 2000 a new era has started in our relation with EU and professional development of teachers continuity has started to be cared out even though not being fully compatible with the principle of. The projects and applications to support teachers' continuing professional development are listed below.

4. Studies of General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development

In Turkey, where there is a central system in teacher education, teachers' in-service training are carried out by units of the Ministry of National Education. The duties and responsibilities for in-service training are conducted by the department of in-service training in the Ministry of National Education up to the date of 14/09/2011. After this date, the department of supporting professional development within the General Directorate of the Teacher Training and Development took responsibility. The duties and responsibilities of the General Directorate of the Teacher Training and Development and the Department of Supporting Professional Development are declared in law 652.

The various courses and seminars for Teachers' professional development are held by the General Directorate of the Teacher Training and Development, Ministry of Education. Indeed, the TALIS research showed that Turkey among 23 participant countries is the leading country supplying conferences and seminars. (OECD, 2009, p. 58). At these events, training manager and Foundation courses, new application programs, developments in technology and training tools and materials are given priority (Ministry of National Education, 2005; cited in Uddin and Silk, 2006, p. 37). The courses and seminars that will be held every year are announced with published training plans.

In Turkey teachers are responsible for carrying out studies related to their profession during the period from the end of semester to the 1st of July and from the 1st of September to the beginning of the new term, besides the activities of in-service training. This is called as a seminar period. During the seminars, teachers are expected to prepare documents on various topics.

5. Fatih Project

Fatih Project, was initiated for the effective use of information technologies and to ensure equality of opportunity in education by the State planning organization covering the years 2006-2010 within the framework of the information society strategy. One of the core components of the project is teachers' in-service training program. Within the framework of the project covering all classes at preschool, primary and secondary-level in Turkish Educational System teachers are expected to be covered by the seminars of "Information

Technologies and the Internet Conscious'. In this context, it is aimed to let teachers use information technology and the Internet in a safe, ethical, sanitary, conscious way, and guide their students for digital citizenship and internet offences (Ministry of Education, 2013). The project, welcoming the part of qualities of information society, is important for development of professional proficiency and leadership of teachers. In this context, Fatih Project is seen as the most important policy implementation in the Turkish Educational System in the 2000s.

6. The Project 'There is No Limit of Teachers'

One of the projects towards the development of teachers' professional practice, is the project called "There's No Limit of Teachers". The project was realized within the context of the Protocol between the Ministry of National Education and Garanti Bank/Teacher Academy Foundation (ÖRAV) within the framework of the Protocol signed on June 20, 2008 with the Ministry of Education, in the academic year 2009-2010. The project was implemented in the academic year 2009-2010, and aimed to the goal of reaching 100 thousand teachers. The 2013-2014 school year was ended in June 2013 reaching 82759 teachers (<http://ekampus.orav.org.tr/blogger/osyp>, 25.05.2014.).

Project has been implemented to increase the number of teachers who are contemporary, democratic, have the principle of enlightened, productive, lifelong learning and high self-esteem with tolerance, can renew themselves, think critically, at peace with the idea and can express themselves in a civilized manner. To achieve these objectives the project focused on communication, classroom management and motivation, measurement and evaluation in order to contribute to the teachers' personal, emotional, vocational development and with implementing in-service training (ÖSY, 2014).

7. Career Steps

Teaching career system is another important application in the teachers' professional development. According to the regulation numbered 5204 and called "Teaching Career Steps" teaching profession career steps are candidate, specialist and head teacher (Official newspaper, 13.08.2005/25905). The main purpose of this system is the development of professional knowledge and skills of teachers. Career steps aimed to gain teaching profession with dynamism. It is planned to constitute competition at their professional knowledge, skills and job performance, providing the opportunity for teachers' professional and personal development. It is aimed to enhance their professional performance in the form of teaching career. In our country the first application relating to the career steps was carried out in 2006, but has not become sustainable applications for a variety of reasons. Related duties and responsibilities have been assigned to the department of teacher competencies and quality improvement within the General Directorate teacher training and development.

8. Basic Education Support Project and School-Based Professional Development Project

After the new phase of the process of the nomination with the EU entered the 2000s, one of the first projects carried out in this sense is the "Basic Education Support Project (BESP)". In the scope of BESP, EU-funded and implemented in 2002 pre-service teacher training programs, teachers' in-service training and qualifications for recognition and career development for teachers are defined (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 9). Teaching competencies are defined as teaching profession general competencies and teaching profession field competencies. These competencies are defined in the frame of "School-Based Professional Development Project (SBPDP).

SBPDP is defined as the process which supports the development of effective learning and teaching environments, skills, values and attitudes of teachers inside and outside of the school. SBPDP is a new concept in Turkish Educational System for the reason of offering a

road map to teachers who want to improve their proficiency in teaching profession with applying and monitoring the professional development plan (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 4).

SBPDP provides the integration of school and environment, supporting teachers' responsibilities for development of themselves and school, time and resource allocation for this development, developing material, sharing their experiences with colleagues. Therefore, ongoing development is intended by learning student, learning teacher and learning school with the model of SBPDP (Ministry of Education, 2007).

There are a number of regulations at the level of the Ministry of Education which support their further education in order to go on their personal and professional development while teaching. Accordingly; those who continue further education, not disrupting their tasks, are allowed to provide the necessary facilities and able to continue their education. In addition, in regulations of in-service training of teachers it is implied that teachers will be sent abroad to get education and to be trained (Ünsal, Kaplan and Ertürkmen, 2012).

It is possible to talk about The Board of Education as one of the applications of Ministry of Education to support the teachers' professional development. Through this portal, the programs, the activity instances, examples of various materials, such as plans are shared with teachers via internet (TTKB, 2010, cited in Holidays, 2010, p. 49).

9. Discussion and Conclusion

Teachers' pre-service trainings are not enough to take responsibility actively during their careers and to solve the problems which they meet under changing conditions. For this reason, both EU countries and Turkey have taken a step aimed at providing continuing professional development of teachers since 2000. However, the most important and fundamental difference teacher education between EU countries and Turkey in terms of teacher education is about sustainability of professional development. Thus, the results of PISA 2012 have emphasized that supporting teachers' professional development, increasing quality of teachers and teachers' participation in activities related with professional development (%90 participation rate) are the common features of Finland which sustains its success even if not in the success rating and Poland which starts to increase with other successful countries (Şirin and Vatanartıran, 2014, pp.37-39).

The other significant difference between EU countries and Turkey is that teachers' professional development activities is not associated with careers and economic levels of teachers in Turkey. Constituting conditions to professionalize teaching job in EU countries necessitate continuing effort for professional development, depends on a performance based-career system, which starts with pre-service trainings of teachers within the scope of profession progression criteria.

Although the efforts of applying constructivist education programs and inserting modern education practices Turkish Education System, parallel vision change haven't been implemented in professional development of teachers in Turkey. Not only pre-service teacher training programs but also in-service professional development activities haven't been adapted with modern education practices. To provide students with more complex and analytical skills, required in twenty first centuries, EU countries give responsibility to teachers for teaching the ways of high level thinking and outperformance (European Commission, 2011, p. 9). Consequently, Turkish Education System has offered teachers with tools consistent with EU educational policies. However, it resulted in a vision for continuing professional development, not created with the same vision. So, this situation have led not to get expected success in outputs of education system.

The other difference between EU countries and Turkey in terms of teachers' continuing professional development is the kinds of professional development activities. While professional development activities focus on seminars and conferences in Turkey (İlğan, 2013, p. 53), EU policies support professional development activities with many sources from schools or out of schools.

When the practices and policies about continuing professional development of teachers in Turkey is considered, it is seen that the system which does not integrate lifelong learning and pre-service trainings having been applied. Moreover, not applying teacher career system effectively and not integrating activities of professional development with teacher career system could be evaluated as an important problem in Turkey. However, in educational system of 18 EU countries including Germany France, Poland, participation rate in professional development activities are directly associated with promotion or profession progression system (European Commission, 2013, p. 61).

It can be claimed that the source of differences or incongruities about teachers' continuing professional development at policy level is the inconsistency between the vision of EU educational policies and Turkey's 2023 vision. While in Turkey's 2023 educational vision, "An educational system which is people-oriented, accessible and makes the creativity and imagination of individuals prominent" (TUBİTAK, 2004, p. 9) will have been expected, in EU educational vision, "Educational systems which are competitive, focus on knowledge-based economic development and train individuals who are needed in 21st centuries" will have been expected.

The consistency between EU countries and Turkey about teachers' continuing professional development could be seen in the policies related with school-based professional development and Fatih Project. Fatih Project which depends on the strategy to be an information society shows consistency with EU insight of knowledge-based, competitive economy. Most educational systems of EU have to have school-based plans for continuing professional development. Furthermore, in educational systems of 11 EU countries including Holland and England, teachers need to have their own continuing professional development plans. Generally these individual plans are developed during teacher evaluation process (European Commission, 2013, p.59). However, in Turkey, since most of the pre-service training programs are prepared by central administration and teacher evaluation process is not associated with teachers' continuing professional development school-based professional development deviates from its political aim.

One of the main objective of EU is to become most powerful competitive knowledge-based economy. In case of full membership in EU, Turkey will be a partner of EU's competitive structure. Therefore, Turkey has to renew policies and aims of education scientifically and to start studies with long-term planning (Tuzcu, 2006, p. 185).

Based on the political efficiency analysis of PISA, the point to be considered is that Turkey's educational policies has not been affected from the results of PISA at desired level (Şirin & Vatanartıran, 2014, p. 53). However, Turkey should not remain insensitive to international educational policies due to its relationship with EU and being an effective part of globalization. Accordingly, Turkey has to evaluate policies and practices at global and EU level for continuing professional development of teachers within the scope of its own social, economic and cultural structure and has to realize holistic and systematic transformation in Turkish Educational System.

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