



REMUNERATION AND WORKING TIME OF TEACHERS IN POLAND – COMPARED TO OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract. The paper discusses the remuneration and working time of Polish teachers in relation to other European countries. The basis for comparison is constituted by international reports and national documents, but they should not be construed without insight into definition differences and in isolation from national specifics. Purely statistical comparison without knowledge of the context may lead to erroneous conclusions. For example, when it comes to the presentation of teachers' statutory working time, there are several models for defining it in European countries, and the direct ranking of countries defining working time in terms of obligatory teaching hours only (Poland, Austria, Belgium, Finland) next to countries (Denmark, Estonia, Malta) that use a definition of general working time may distort the actual situation.

WYNAGRODZENIE I CZAS PRACY NAUCZYCIELI W POLSCE – NA TLE INNYCH KRAJÓW EUROPEJSKICH

Słowa kluczowe: wynagrodzenie nauczycieli, czas pracy nauczycieli, modele czasu pracy

Streszczenie. W artykule omawiane są kwestie wynagrodzenia i czasu pracy polskich nauczycieli w odniesieniu do innych krajów europejskich. Bazą wyjściową do porównania są międzynarodowe raporty oraz dokumenty krajowe, jednak nie należy ich interpretować bez wniknięcia w różnice definicyjne i w oderwaniu od specyfiki państwowej. Komparacja czysto statystyczna bez znajomości kontekstu może prowadzić do wyciągnięcia błędnych wniosków.

Na przykład, jeśli chodzi o przedstawianie ustawowego czasu pracy nauczycieli, w krajach europejskich istnieje kilka modeli go określających i bezpośrednie uszeregowanie państw, w których czas pracy definiuje się przez przyzmat tylko pensum dydaktycznego (Polska, Austria, Belgia, Finlandia), obok krajów (Dania, Estonia, Malta), gdzie określa się ogólny czas pracy, co może powodować zniekształcenie rzeczywistości.

Introduction

One of the significant issues causing dissatisfaction among Polish teachers and lowering of the attractiveness of the profession is remuneration. Teachers' salaries have never been high. It is well known that making a financial career in this profession is impossible. Teachers, and the part of Polish society that sympathises with them, are convinced that salaries are extremely low and inadequate to the requirements and duties imposed.

On a side note, it should be added that there is also a group of citizens who have quite the opposite view of teachers' salaries, which is perhaps due to the numerous media reports mostly portraying Polish teachers as well paid and having few statutory working hours. This case is usually presented in a very simplistic way, based on one aspect and omitting a number of others, which the readers or listeners are not aware of and which leads them to wrong conclusions.

Therefore, the aim of this article is to organise the topics related to teachers' salaries and working time in Poland and to show how the situation of educators in other countries in these aspects looks like. This will dispel doubts and misunderstandings concerning said issues. However, it will not be a purely statistical comparison from which one could directly conclude who is better off and where, as different countries use different conversion rates and coding which cannot be directly compared. Nevertheless, a comparison of salaries of the Polish teachers with their counterparts in other European countries and a presentation of working time tables with commentary will allow a reliable judgement on the economic position and working hours of Polish teachers.

Salaries of teachers in Poland and other countries

In principle, it can be said that teachers' salaries in Poland are much lower than in most European countries. Although the salaries increased by 5.35% in 2018 and by about 15% in 2019 in our country, this did not contribute to a big change in the salary position of a Polish teacher compared to other countries.

Nor did the increases declared in early December 2019 by Minister Dariusz Pi-ontkowski – by 6% as of September 2020 – change much. The government pointed to an increase in some teachers' salaries as of January 2020, due to an increase in the minimum wage, but this applied to a small group of people – around 19,000, representing only 3 per cent of all teachers (Mituła, 2020).

The current data on teachers' salaries are presented in Table 1, which also includes the annual conversion rate in Euro for the sake of comparison with other European countries, as international reports usually provide the annual conversion rate either in Euro (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice), or in Dollars (OECD).

Table 1. Minimum rates of basic salary effective as of 1 September 2020 (with annual conversion rate in euros in brackets)

Education level	Professional advancement levels			
	Trainee teacher	Contract teacher	Appointed teacher	Certified teacher
1. Master's degree with pedagogical preparation	PLN 2,949/month (EUR 8,043/ year)	PLN 3,034/month (EUR 8,274/ year)	PLN 3,445/month (EUR 9,395/ year)	PLN 4,046/month (EUR 1,1035/ year)
2. Master's degree without pedagogical preparation, bachelor's degree with pedagogical preparation	PLN 2,818/month (EUR 7,685/ year)	PLN 2,823/month (EUR 7,699/ year)	PLN 3,002/month (EUR 8,187/ year)	PLN 3,523/month (EUR 9,608/ year)
3. Professional title of Bachelor (Engineer) without preparation in the field of pedagogy, diploma of graduation from a teacher college or a foreign language teacher college, other education	PLN 2,800/month (EUR 7,636/ year)	PLN 2,818/month (EUR 7,685/ year)	PLN 2,842/month (EUR 7,750/ year)	PLN 3,079/month (EUR 8,397/ year)

Source: own study based on: Annex to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 27 August 2020 (item 1491).

Before making comparisons, it is worth noting that in our country, teachers' salaries are differentiated according to the level of professional advancement and level of education, while it is irrelevant whether a teacher works in kindergarten (ISCED 02), in primary school (ISCED 1) or in secondary school (ISCED 24 and 34). In other European countries, the ISCED level is usually also the basis for differentiation of teachers' salaries.

Despite the fact that in Poland most teachers have qualifications above the minimum European requirements, the annual basic salary of a beginning teacher by purchasing power standard was less than half of the EU average in 2017. It is also important that the curve of salary growth over the course of a career is relatively flat, which shows that salaries do not increase significantly with increasing experience and achieving successive levels of professional promotion. Taking into account the growth of teachers' salaries in Poland after 10 and 15 years of work, our country was ranked last but three among 29 countries (Education and Training Monitor 2019).

The latest data show that Poland is among the six countries (along with Bulgaria, Latvia, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia) where the statutory salary for beginning teachers is the lowest, at less than EUR 9,000 per year. These six countries have the lowest GDP per capita in the EU. Albania, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey have similarly low salary levels (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2020).

In the following six Member States, which have the next lowest level of GDP per capita in the EU, teachers' statutory starting salaries are below EUR 20,000 per year. These are: Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Lithuania, and Slovenia. They are followed by France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, and the UK (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland), with annual starting salaries in the range of EUR 22,000 and 28,000. Also within this range is the European average, which stands at EUR 24,499 for teachers at pre-primary level, EUR 26,237 at primary level, EUR 27,419 for teachers working in lower secondary education and EUR 28,420 in upper secondary education. Teachers' salaries are higher than average in Belgium, Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (Scotland). Teachers in Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have the highest salaries (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2020). It should be noted that all these countries have a high GDP per capita and salary levels are generally correlated with the measured standard of living in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.

Table 2 presents the gross annual statutory salary in euro for full-time, fully qualified teachers in public schools during their initial working period. The data are for 2019 and present Poland against 42 European countries. The countries are ranked in order of the highest amount at ISCED 02 (in pre-school education), whereas it should be noted that while in some countries (e.g., Iceland) teachers earn the most at that ISCED 02, in most of them the trend is opposite. Moreover, there are also countries where salaries are the same at each of the levels (e.g., Poland, Scotland, England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Portugal).

Table 2. Gross annual salary (EUR) for qualified teachers in public schools in 2019

State	ISCED 02	ISCED 1	ISCED 24	ISCED 34
Liechtenstein	69 503	75 812	89 537	89 537
Switzerland	67 422	71 917	80 367	90 525
Luxembourg	67 391	67 391	76 376	76 376
Denmark	45 622	52 594	52 861	50 345
Germany	–	50 029	55 153	58 542
Iceland	44 994	44 657	44 657	43 340
Norway	39 204	48 188	48 188	52 248
Austria	–	37 332	36 854	36 251
Ireland	–	36 318	36 318	36 318
The Netherlands	35 600	35 600	37 809	37 809
Sweden	35 130	36 037	37 170	37 856
Belgium – German-speaking Community	34 073	34 073	34 073	42 692
Belgium – Flemish Community	33 048	33 048	33 048	41 232
Scotland	32 195	32 195	32 195	32 195
Belgium – French Community	31 980	31 980	31 980	39 787
Finland	29 008	32 815	35 441	37 210
Spain	29 918	29 918	33 392	33 392
England	28 022	28 022	28 022	28 022
Wales	27 023	27 023	27 023	27 023
Northern Ireland	26 429	26 429	26 429	26 429
France	26 329	26 329	27 709	27 709
Italy	23 993	23 993	25 829	25 829
Portugal	22 310	22 310	22 310	22 310
Malta	19 487	23 716	23 716	23 716
Slovenia	18 658	18 658	18 658	18 658
Estonia	–	14 600	14 600	14 600
Croatia	–	13 547	13 547	13 547
Greece	13 104	13 104	13 104	13 104
Czech Republic	12 014	12 902	12 902	12 902
Lithuania	9 903	14 304	14 304	14 304
Turkey	8 979	8 979	8 979	8 979
Latvia	8 520	8 520	8 520	8 520
Romania	8 413	8 413	8 413	8 413
Montenegro	8 132	8 132	8 132	8 132
Slovakia	7 894	8 832	8 832	8 832
Poland	7 226	7 226	7 226	7 226
Hungary	7 193	7 193	7 488	7 488
Serbia	6 217	6 972	6 972	6 972
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6 120	6 528	6 936	8 160
Northern Macedonia	6 038	6 209	6 209	6 482
Bulgaria	5 161	5 161	5 161	5 161
Albania	4 214	4 969	5 164	5 457

Source: Own study based on European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2020.

As it can be seen from the data above, the salaries of Polish teachers are the last but six among the European countries and are almost ten times lower than the highest teachers' salaries in Europe. Admittedly, these data concern the year 2019 and a trainee teacher, but even when taking into account the 2020 salary increase and professional promotion, the position of a Polish teacher will not change significantly compared to other countries. Also, other sources, for example OECD studies, demonstrate that the earnings of a Polish teacher compared to other countries gathered in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD (OECD 2020a) are low.

The salaries of school managers in Poland are also poor compared to the salaries of their counterparts in other EU countries and are only slightly above those of ordinary teachers (Education and Training Monitor 2019). The maximum salary for school principals is, on average, USD 86,974 for OECD countries and economies, and ranges from USD 32,337 in Poland to USD 152,305 in Luxembourg (OECD 2020c).

However, salary alone cannot be a reference for comparison without paying attention to teachers' working time, which varies from country to country, as will be discussed later in this paper.

Teachers' working time in Poland vs their actual responsibilities

In Europe, teachers' working time is defined in three ways: as statutory teaching time (in some countries a small, defined number of hours for other duties is added), time spent in compulsory attendance at school, or total working time. Most countries use only one or two models to define it. Some of them, such as Spain and Hungary, use all the three models.

The statutory teaching time often depends on professional experience, school level or the subject taught. In Germany, Cyprus, Greece, and Portugal, the principle is that the longer the length of service as a teacher, the lower the number of hours in statutory teaching time (usually 2 hours less). In Italy, Slovakia, and also Portugal, teachers have to work fewer hours if at a higher level of education. In Germany, on the other hand, the number of statutory teaching hours also depends on the subject taught: teachers of artistic, practical, and cultural subjects earn a higher salary (Górowska-Fells, Płatos, Chojnacki, 2019).

In Poland, there is a model based on a statutory teaching time, which varies depending on the type of teacher or the type of their function. The Teacher's Charter distinguishes 12 groups of pedagogues with different statutory teaching

time. This means that, depending on the type of institution and function, teachers work more or less than the generally recognised 18 hours per week. For example, kindergarten teachers have to work 25 teaching hours (45 minutes each), dayroom teachers – 26, and librarians – 30 hours. A summary of the statutory teaching time in Poland depending on the position in relation to the type/level of school is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of statutory teaching time in Poland per position. Data for 2020.

Position – type, level of school	Weekly number of hours of obligatory teaching, upbringing, caring	Weekly number of hours of compulsory teaching activities determined by the managing authority of the school or centre
Kindergarten teachers, except teachers working with groups of 6-year-olds	25	–
Teachers in kindergartens and other pre-school institutions working with groups of 6-year-old children	22	–
Teachers of: special kindergartens, primary schools, special schools, general upper secondary schools, general education subjects and theoretical vocational subjects in schools providing vocational education, including special schools and craft training in juvenile shelters and correctional facilities, theoretical vocational subjects in qualifying vocational courses, artistic and general education subjects in art schools	18	–
Educators of school dayrooms and semi-boardings schools (except educators of dayrooms in special schools), community dayrooms and clubs, including preventive and educational as well as therapeutic ones, educators of youth sociotherapy centres	26	–
Teachers of boarding schools, dormitories, Dr. H. Jordan's game parks, open-air day care centres, permanent school youth hostels	30	–

Table 3 (continued)

Position - type, level of school	Weekly number of hours of obligatory teaching, upbringing, caring	Weekly number of hours of compulsory teaching activities determined by the managing authority of the school or centre
Educators: (a) in children care and treatment institutions, (b) in children's holiday homes – including for teaching activities, (c) in special education care centres, correctional facilities, juvenile shelters, dayrooms in special schools, youth education centres, extracurricular educational compounds organised in medical entities	26 26 10 24	-
Teachers of youth clubs, youth culture centres, extracurricular work centres, extracurricular specialised centres, inter-school sports centres	18	-
Teachers – librarians of school libraries	30	-
Teachers of psychological-educational counselling centres	20	-
Teachers with qualifications in special education who are additionally employed to co-organise inclusive education and co-organise the education of students with disabilities, social maladjustment and at risk of social maladjustment	20	-
Pedagogues, psychologists, speech therapists, educational therapists, vocational counsellors, with the exception of teachers employed in psychological-pedagogical counselling centres	-	not more than 22
Teachers of practical vocational training in all types of schools and in vocational qualification courses.	-	not more than 20

Source: Polish Journal of Laws 2019, item 2215.

It should be said that there is a certain complication related to the tasks performed by Polish teachers, which contributes to the negative perception of the profession. Often only teachers' tasks related to teaching, i.e., as part of the statutory teaching time, are noticed. In reality, a teacher has many more duties, including non-teaching ones. In the research conducted by the Educational Research

Institute, entitled “Research on the time and working conditions of teachers” in 2013, a list of 55 activities carried out by Polish educators was compiled. These were divided into four groups: related to teaching work, to educational tasks, to professional development, and to administrative issues. In light of this research, activities performed by almost all teachers are very often teaching activities, such as: teaching lessons, preparing for teaching lessons, running other activities, preparing for them, checking students’ work; and keeping class registers (the latter included to administrative activities). Other tasks performed slightly less frequently but still often are preparing students for competitions and subject Olympics, individual meetings with parents, working in the subject team and searching for and reading teaching aids, duty at discos, running school events, meetings, working in the education team, attending conferences, calculating attendance or participating in pedagogical councils (*Liczą się nauczyciele*, 2014, pp. 120–122).

Identifying teachers’ working time solely with the statutory teaching salary is not a right approach. Research shows that a teacher works 47 hours per week on average (*Liczą się nauczyciele*, 2014, pp. 122–125), and not the statutory teaching time.

It should be noted that in many European countries, there is a significantly expanded support staff that relieves the teachers and assists them in performing their duties. In the UK, for example, the teacher is supported by a team of people who deal with a wide variety of tasks, many of which are performed by Polish teachers personally. There is a “child wellbeing support team” who are there to support the personal, social, and emotional aspects of the pupil’s development. There are people providing assistance to children with specific learning difficulties, working with a variety of specialists. However, this group also includes “lunchtime supervisors” who watch over the children during lunch breaks, in the school canteens, as well as outside the school (on the playing fields, playgrounds), where they ensure safety and offer help in social skills and play. A significant role in English schools is played by parent support advisors who work with the guardians, children, but also with external stakeholders to remove any barriers to a child’s learning. They address issues related to a lack of progress in learning, to behaviour, to a lack of positive relationships with the school, both for the child and the parent. The main objective of their work is to enable pupils to engage properly in school, to take responsibility for their actions, and to overcome any difficulties. Teachers in the UK are also supported by technical, IT, administrative and, especially in recent years, extended physical education staff,

who have taken over sports education from them, also in early school education (Miko-Giedyk et al., 2020, pp. 88–95).

It is worth mentioning the prevalent type of specialist teacher assistant in European countries, which is defined in different ways: from teaching assistant to learning mentor, from classroom assistant to special support assistant. In the British schools mentioned above, the role of the teaching assistant is significant and their tasks are very extensive. Initially, their tasks consisted mainly of clerical and administrative duties to provide support to teachers in these matters. Some assistants were also employed to work with children with special educational needs, while others had a more general supporting role in the classroom. Over time, assistants have taken on responsibilities related to improving school achievement, supporting the examination system in schools, dealing with negative pupil behaviour, and supporting children with special needs. Nowadays, their competences have considerably expanded and such assistants' task is to cooperate with the teacher in meeting all the pupils' needs and to support the educational, social, and emotional aspects of child's development. A traditional classroom with one teacher has been replaced by one in which a team of professionals work together (Miko-Giedyk et al., 2020, pp. 92–95).

This commentary is an important factor which should be taken into account when construing international reports, as a one-dimensional view may result in erroneous conclusions. For example, if we look at a summary of working hours in general lower secondary schools in 2000, 2005, and 2017 in OECD countries (Figure 1), we might think that a teacher in Poland has the fewest working hours. However, this is a compilation based on official statutory regulations, according to which public school teachers in OECD countries are required to teach on average: 1,044 hours per year at pre-school level, 784 hours at primary level, 703 hours at lower secondary level, and 657 hours at upper secondary level. Poland is presented in the last place, as the country with the lowest number of hours.

Also Figure 2, which lists OECD countries by annual statutory working time for teachers in public upper secondary schools in 2019, places our country at the end of the list, in this case in penultimate place.

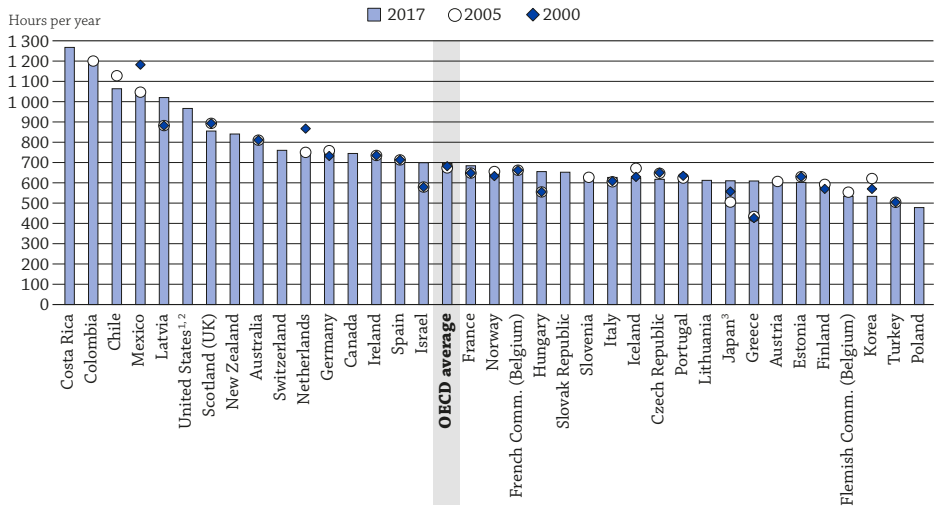


Figure 1. Annual number of teaching hours in general lower secondary education in 2000, 2005, and 2017 in OECD countries

Source: OECD 2018, p. 380.

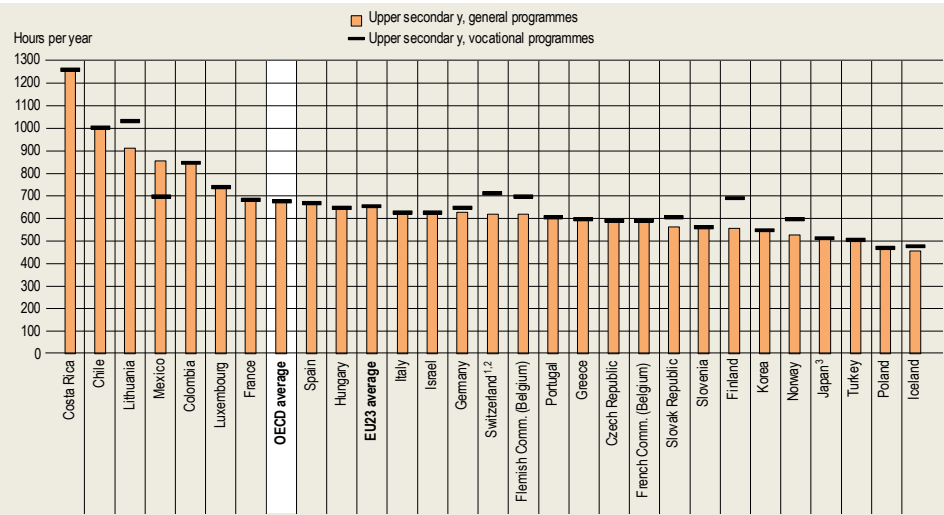


Figure 2. Annual statutory working time for teachers in upper secondary (public) schools in 2019, differentiated by the general programme and the vocational programme in OECD countries

Source: OECD 2020b, p. 408.

Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that there are differences between countries in the responsibilities of teachers and the tasks they carry out in their

professional work, as mentioned above, which does not allow for a clear evaluation on the basis of statistical reports.

Teachers’ working time in selected European countries

In order to show international differences, this section will present selected models for the statutory determination of teachers’ working time in European countries.

In Austria, teachers’ working time is mainly based on the statutory teaching time. Teachers working in primary and secondary schools are obliged to teach 22 lessons per week. Lessons last 50 minutes. The teachers additionally spend two hours per week on consultations with pupils and parents. If they teach more demanding subjects, their statutory teaching time is reduced to 20 lessons per week.

In Belgium, in the Flemish Community, a lesson also lasts 50 minutes. Here, teachers at ISCED 02 and ISCED 1 have a statutory teaching time of 26 hours, excluding hours spent at staff meetings and meetings with parents. A preschool education teacher can work between 24 and 26 hours, a primary school teacher can have one hour more (up to 27 hours per week), and a religion, ethics, or physical education teacher – another hour more (Górowska-Fells, Płatos, Chojnacki, 2019).

In mainstream secondary schools, the teaching time ranges from 20 to 29 hours, depending on the grade (position) of the teacher and the type of subject they teach (general, technical, artistic, or practical subjects).

The weekly teaching time for full-time secondary school teachers in Belgium is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Weekly statutory teaching time of teachers in secondary schools in Belgium (Flemish Community). Status as at May 2019

Education level ¹	General, technical, artistic subjects	Practical subjects
ISCED 2	22-23	22-23
ISCED 3 (grades 1-2)	21-22	29-30
ISCED 3 (grades 3-4)	20-21	29-30
ISCED 4	20-21	29-30

Source: Górowska-Fells, Płatos, Chojnacki, 2019.

¹ ISCED 2 means lower secondary school, ISCED 3 – upper secondary school, and ISCED 4 – post-secondary school.

In Belgium, in the French Community, the working time of a primary school teacher amounts to 24 lessons (50 minutes each) per week. In certain cases, the statutory time may be limited to 22 lesson-hours per week. Teachers who teach certain courses, e.g., languages and philosophy lessons, have a statutory teaching time of 24 lessons per week.

At the lower secondary level, the working time is determined on an annual basis and amounts to 728 hours, with the time spent on teaching varying from 667 to 728 hours. Working time for teachers at the upper secondary level, teaching general subjects, is 667 hours on an annual basis, with the statutory teaching time varying from 607 to 667 hours per year. Teachers of vocational subjects work 1,001 hours per year. Their statutory teaching time varies between 607 and 1001 hours per year and depends on the educational pathway (type/profile) and class. The weekly working hours of teachers in secondary schools are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Weekly statutory teaching time of teachers in secondary schools in Belgium (French Community). Status as of May 2019

Teachers according to learning path, class, subject	Number of (50-minute) lesson-hours
Educational pathways preparing for entry to higher education – general and technical (grades 1-3), educational pathways leading to qualifications (grades 3 and 4) – teachers of general, technical, philosophy, and special subjects	22–24
Educational pathways preparing for entry to higher education – general and technical (grades 4–6), educational pathways leading to qualifications (grades 5–7), teachers of general, technical, philosophy, and special subjects	20–24
Educational pathways to qualification, teachers of technical subjects and practical vocational training	24–28
Technical subjects and practical vocational training	30–33

Source: Górowska-Fells, Platos, Chojnacki, 2019.

The working time of teachers in Cyprus is defined as a statutory teaching time the size of which depends on position and professional experience. Primary school teachers with experience from 1 to 14 years are assigned statutory teaching time of 29 hours per week. Teachers with between 15 and 20 years of service are required to complete 27 teaching hours per week. On the other hand, the statutory teaching time of teachers with more than 21 years of experience and teachers over 50 years of age amounts to 25 hours. For secondary school

teachers, the distribution of teaching hours constituting their statutory teaching time is slightly different, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Weekly statutory teaching time of teachers in secondary schools in Cyprus. Status as of May 2019

Length of service as a teacher	Number of lessons per week
0–7 years in the profession	24
8–15 years in the profession	22
16–19 years in the profession	20
20 or more years in the profession	18

Source: Górowska-Fells, Platos, Chojnacki, 2019.

In Finland, there is a 45-minute lesson-hour and the statutory teaching time ranges from 16 to 24 hours per week. The exact amount depends on the type of school and the subject taught. Some teachers work in the office hours, i.e., they are on site from 8.00 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. However, they are not obliged to stay on the school premises if they have no lessons or other tasks on a given day.

The working time of a teacher in France is defined as a statutory teaching time and ranges between 18 and 24 (60-minute) hours per week. Its exact size depends on the level of education and the type of position. At the pre-school and primary education level, there is only one type of teaching post for which the statutory working time is defined by legislation as 25 hours per week. At the (first – and second-level) secondary education, there are various types of teaching posts. Each type has a separate number of statutory teaching hours defined in the legislation: *professeurs certifiés* (the most numerous group of teachers at this level) with statutory teaching time of 18 hours; *professeurs agrégés* – 15 hours; *professeurs d'éducation physique et sportive* (physical education teachers) – 20 hours; *professeurs agrégés de la discipline d'éducation physique et sportive* (physical education teachers with the *agrégés* status) – 17 hours. Secondary school teachers may have their statutory hours respectively increased or reduced, depending on the needs of the school (or its organisation). In secondary schools, teachers often have to work an additional hour if there is such a need in the school. Teachers having additional tasks, such as training trainee teachers, have a reduced statutory teaching time.

The statutory teaching time of primary school teachers amounts to 5 (40-minute) hours per day. The annual statutory teaching time is 915 hours. A teacher is not required to be on school premises after classes, except for the compulsory

36 hours defined under a separate collective agreement. The time of additional activities related to the performance of teaching duties (documentation, assigned tasks, preparation of classes, contacts with pupils, meetings) is not standardised. In secondary schools, teachers usually work around 22 hours per week, but their working time is not formally regulated and results from the organisation of the school. The teacher's responsibilities are at the discretion of the school principal. In the case of secondary schools, the time of compulsory participation in school activities is determined under a separate collective agreement and amounts to 33 hours (Górowska-Fells, Płatos, Chojnacki, 2019).

In Germany, teachers' teaching hours vary between the *Länder* and school types. In most of them, a lesson lasts 45 minutes and the statutory teaching time varies between 21 and 32 hours. The number of hours depends on the type and level of school, the teacher's qualifications and the subject they teach – it may be higher for teachers of arts and practical classes. The teaching time is reduced when the teacher performs other functions, e.g., managerial, administrative (e.g., principal or deputy principal) or has other special tasks, such as preparing time-tables, working in the school library, engaging in the work of school councils. Teachers aged 55 and more are entitled to a reduction in statutory their teaching time of 1–3 hours. As a result of the reduction in outlays on new teaching posts, most *Länder* in the west of the country have increased the statutory teaching time and reduced the number of hours for additional tasks. As a result of demographic changes, financial constraints on education, the increasing age of teachers, and the changing role of schools, teams have been formed in some *Länder* to develop new regulations on teachers' working time. New models of teacher working time have been developed that offer teachers the opportunity to adjust their working hours according to the current number of pupils – teachers work an extra hour in years when this is necessary, and when the number of pupils decreases, they work one hour less while maintaining the same number of full-time hours (Górowska-Fells, Płatos, Chojnacki, 2019).

In Italy, in addition to the statutory teaching time ranging from 18 (for secondary school teachers) to 25 (60-minute) hours (for pre-school teachers), teachers can undertake additional paid hours: e.g., up to 6 extra hours per week for activities extending the educational or sporting offer, or for planning activities, conducting own research, or related to running special projects with difficult young people or for pupils with a migrant background, etc.

Statutory working time for teachers defined as general working time and expressed in clock hours applies in Denmark, Estonia, Sweden, England, Lithuania,

and Malta. In the latter, teachers work 27.5 hours per week, which amounts to 5.5 hours a day during the months of September to May. In June, teachers work just under 19 hours, as schools are open for half the day. In England, the working time is resolved in such a way that teachers are required to work 195 days per year, of which 190 days is for teaching and 5 days for further training or other duties. Within the 195 days, 1,265 hours should be devoted to teaching hours, participation in various meetings, including with parents, and professional development. The definition of working time takes into account such activities of educators as preparing classes, assessing and monitoring students' progress, keeping records, etc., but does not specify how many hours exactly a teacher is supposed to spend on them (Górowska-Fells, Płatos, Chojnacki, 2019).

In the Netherlands, Romania, Croatia, Slovenia, Scotland, and the Czech Republic, teachers' working time is defined as the general working time and the statutory teaching time, while in Greece and Luxembourg, the teacher's compulsory availability at school and the statutory teaching time are defined. In Spain and Hungary, a teacher has a defined compulsory availability time at school, a general working time, and a statutory teaching time. The working time in Spain is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Working time of teachers in Spain by type of education (ISCED)

	Pre-school education (ISCED 02)		Primary education (ISCED 1)		Secondary education (ISCED 24, 34)	
dimension determining method	weekly	yearly	weekly	yearly	weekly	yearly
Statutory teaching time	25	875	25	875	20	600
Compulsory school attendance hours	30	1,140	30	1,140	30	1,140
Overall working time	37.5	1425	37.5	1425	37.5	1425

Source: Górowska-Fells, Płatos, Chojnacki 2019.

The time of compulsory attendance at school of the 30 hours is used by teachers for meetings with the school management, with parents, for planning classroom work, assessing pupils' work, on-call duty, and extra-curricular and supplementary activities. The remaining 7.5 hours per week, included in the general working time, are defined as teachers' availability time outside school, which they

usually allocate to professional development, preparation for classes, checking examination papers and evaluation (Górowska-Fells, Płatos, Chojnacki, 2019).

Conclusion

The analysis of teachers' remuneration in other European countries and in Poland demonstrates the low financial attractiveness of Polish educators, which probably manifests itself in the feeling of being undervalued of those involved. In addition, the comparison of working time between countries that use different models to define the statutory obligation of teaching activities, may result, without knowing the specifics of each way of defining, in a number of misunderstandings. On the one hand, it may be unfair to identify the tasks performed by Polish teachers with teaching duties which are defined on the basis of statutory teaching time. On the other hand, the lack of specification of additional tasks of teachers, of which they are well aware, may be perceived as a factor of trust for representatives of this professional group and an expression of autonomy, which is necessary in the profession. We know that only an autonomous teacher can shape a student who is able to think and act independently, while limited autonomy may lead to the formation of personalities that meet only external requirements (Kwiatkowska 2014, p. 42).

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