

N E W

M O NITORING

GUIDELINES TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE  
ECEC TEACHERS CURRICULA

# European Comparative Report on ECEC Teachers Curricula in unitary and separate systems and Recommendations



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Recommendations for a pre-primary teachers' curricula for a unified system ISCED 0 (0 – 6  
years)

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## European Comparative Report on ECEC Teachers Curricula in unitary and separate systems and Recommendations

### Introduction

The role of high-quality ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) for a wide range of short- and long-term benefits for individuals and society has been extensively supported (see Council of the European Union, 2011). Countries have adopted different strategies to achieve the mutual goal of an affordable, accessible and effective ECEC and are, despite the common policy goals, at very different stages of policy development and implementation (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). European countries can be placed on a continuum (from integrated to split systems) according to four criteria linked to the quality dimensions

## Introduction

- 1.settings (unitary or separate) - where,
- 2.authorities (single or dual) - how,
- 3.highly qualified staff throughout the entire ECEC phase (minimum ISCED level 6) - who,
- 4.education guidelines applying for all settings- what.



Unitary ECEC systems, that include the whole pre-primary age group (0-6) have been found to be more effective than separate systems, in terms of the organisation of services and quality assurance, while split systems tend to weaken the provision of high-quality ECEC because governance processes are more complicated due to the fragmentation of administrative responsibilities. The ECEC policy integration dimensions in the focus of the report are the “where” (Setting) and the “who” (Staff).

Moreover, ECEC is especially beneficial for disadvantaged children (low socio-economic and migrant backgrounds, children with special needs or disabilities), including those on the autism spectrum, whose gains in cognitive and socio-emotional development are higher than for neurotypical children. However, these children tend to be less represented in ECEC, due to the lack of adapted settings. The report focuses also on this topic within teacher education/training.

# Introduction

This report is a part of the NEMO project (NEw MOnitoring guidelines to develop innovative ECEC teachers curricula) and aims to introduce and recommend guidelines for a new curricula

for pre-primary school teachers(i), within a unified ISCED 0 system (0-6 years), taking ASD children's needs into account.

Terminology always poses a challenge in the comparative reports, as often national terms related to education imply certain systemic solutions that may not be embedded in their English counterparts. Alternatively, English terms may imply meanings that do not have representations in national education systems. In this report, we use the term 'preschool', 'pre-primary' (related to education, teachers etc.) interchangeably. The terms 'ECEC teachers', 'pre-school teachers', 'kindergarten teachers', 'pre-primary teachers' and most general term 'core practitioners' are used interchangeably. The terms 'pedagogue', 'educator', 'childcare practitioner', 'pedagogical staff', 'early childhood teacher' may also apply.

# 2. Aim of the report



The aim of the report is a comparative analysis of different ECEC settings in European countries and their teachers' study/training programmes (curricula etc.) with a special focus on the countries of the NEMO partnership: Slovenia, Sweden, Spain, Cyprus, and Italy. The aim is also to explore the good practices of the selected countries. This provides us with a baseline to prepare recommendations for a unified pre-primary European teacher curriculum [European ECEC teacher curriculum proposal]. Based on the results of this report, we introduce and recommend guidelines for pre-primary teachers' curricula for a unified system ISCED 0 (0 – 6 years), by also considering ASD children's needs and other outputs in the project. With this, we also wish to encourage European policymakers responsible for national ECEC systems, to widen their monitoring and curricula guidelines into a unitary perspective (0-6), including the innovative methodologies and tools developed in the project.



# 3. Methodology

## Participating countries

For this comparative report, we included all 5 countries participating in the NEMO project (Slovenia, Cyprus, Sweden, Spain, and Italy). Each country's representative(s) has provided data on the questionnaire designed specifically for this report.

## Data sources

Official documents issued and/or recognised by central/top-level authorities were the primesources of information when answering questions.



## Instrument

A questionnaire was developed for the purpose of this study, including questions covering the main ECEC settings, staff categories included in it, initial education requirements and the associated curricula, and continuous professional development. The complete questionnaire is available via the link in Annex 1. The collection of data referred to mainstream public and private ECEC provision that was within the regulatory framework in the 2019/2020 school year. Only centre-/school-based provision and not home-based provision were reported. Partners used official documents issued and/or recognised by central/top-level authorities, representative information on regional regulations and common practices. Furthermore, national steering and legislative documents, scientific articles, reports, national analyses/ studies, national Statistic Office, and Eurydice studies, were also reported.

# 4. Results

We have analysed different elements of the ECEC systems in five European countries - Slovenia, Sweden, Spain, Cyprus and Italy. Across these countries, we have compared the main ECEC settings (table 1) and ECEC staff categories in these settings (table 2) with a special focus on teacher education. An in-depth comparison was conducted for the minimum qualification levels of the core staff categories based on ISCED levels (table 3), the main elements of their initial educational programmes (table 4, e. g. title of the programme, provider, duration), the presence of topics (table 5, e. g. pedagogical/psychological topics, special didactics, school experience). We have also compared the programmes based on the subjects/courses in the study programmes.



## 4. Results

### Main ECEC settings

Results (Table 1) show variations of ECEC settings in the NEMO countries. Slovenia has a single main setting across the entire preschool age (vrtec). The situation is similar in Sweden (Förskola) even though Sweden has two main settings (a separate setting for the last year before primary schooling begins). It is important to note that the pre-primary class setting is in the phase of phasing out – after 2026 it will be integrated into primary years. On the other hand, Spain has either an integrated setting or separate settings for younger and older children (Escuelas infantiles – primer ciclo; Escuelas infantiles – segundo ciclo). In Cyprus two separate settings exist for younger and older children with an overlap for children at the age of 3 to 4;8 years (Vrefopaidokomikoi Stathmoi; Nipiagogeio).



In Italy, until recently two distinct settings have existed for younger and older children (Servizi educativi – nido d’infanzia; Scuola dell’infanzia). However, since the law in 2017, these two settings make up an ‘integrated system 0-6’. The integrated system is in the phase of implementation – the ECEC system is currently typically still represented by split settings.

Looking at the European level, most countries provide centre-based ECEC in two separate age- dependent settings; in almost one-third of countries, it is provided in a unitary setting, while in several countries both unitary and separate settings co-exist (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). In this sense, NEMO countries represent variations present across Europe.

## 4. Results

Table 1. ISCED Level 0 in the participating countries (only centre-based settings; based on data from the questionnaire and European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019)

Countries	Age of children						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Slovenia	Vrtec (Eng. Kindergarten)						
	ISCED 010		ISCED 020				
Sweden	Förskola (Eng. Preschool centre)						Förskoleklass (Eng. Pre-primary class)
	ISCED 010		ISCED 020				
Spain	Escuelas infantiles (primer y segundo ciclo) (Eng. Preschool, first and second cycle)						
	Escuelas infantiles (primer ciclo) (Eng. Preschool, first cycle)		Escuelas infantiles (segundo ciclo) Colegios de educación infantil y primaria (Eng. Preschool, second cycle; Preschool and primary education schools)				
	ISCED 010		ISCED 020				
Cyprus	Vrefopaidokomikoi Stathmoi* (Eng. Day nursery)						
	ISCED 010						
				Nipiagogeio (Eng. Kindergarten)	Prodimitiki (Eng. Pre-primary class)		
			ISCED 020				
Italy <sup>†</sup>	Servizi educativi (nido d'infanzia)* (Eng. Educational services and Nurseries)		Scuola dell'infanzia (Eng. Pre-primary school)				
	ISCED 010		ISCED 020				

Notes: ISCED 010 = early childhood educational development programmes; ISCED 020 = pre-primary education programmes; <sup>†</sup> = Ministry of education is responsible for the promotion and the development of the newly introduced 0–6 integrated system; Italy has introduced 'integrated ECEC 0–6' with the law in 2017, however, currently, ECEC services in Italy remain represented by, for the most part, a split system – dotted line separating the two settings reflects this (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019 has the reference year 2018/19 and also lists Italy as having two split age-dependent settings); \* = responsible authority is from education or the social administration.

## 4. Results

Table 2. ECEC staff's categories required qualifications for settings in included countries in national languages with English translations (core practitioners in blue and assistants in black)

	Slovenia	Sweden	Spain	Cyprus <sup>4</sup>	Italy			
Setting ///Required Qualification	Vitec (Kindergarten)	Förskola <sup>1</sup> (Preschool centre)	Escuelas infantiles (primer ciclo) <sup>2</sup> (Preschool, first cycle)	Escuelas infantiles (segundo ciclo) Colegios de educación infantil y primaria <sup>2</sup> (Preschool, second cycle; Preschool and primary education schools) Escuelas infantiles (primer y segundo ciclo) (Preschool, first and second cycle)	Υρεσopaidokomikoi Stathmoi (Day nursery)	Nipiagogioi (Kindergarten)	Servizi educativi (nido d'infanzia) (Educational services and Nurseries)	Scuola dell'infanzia (Pre- primary school)
Upper secondary (ISCED 3)	Pomočnica vzgojiteljice (preschool assistant)		Asistente educativo (Educational Assistant)					
Post- secondary non-tertiary (ISCED 4)		Elevassisten (Student Assistant)				Operatori di Nido Familiare (The family day- care operator)		
Short-cycle tertiary education (ISCED 5)			Técnico Superior en Educación Infantil (Advanced technician in preschool education)					
Bachelor's degree (ISCED 6)	Vzgojiteljica (Preschool teacher)	Förskollärare (Preschool teacher)	Grado en Maestro de Educación Infantil (Teacher of pre-primary education)	Nipiagogos (Kindergarten teacher)	Nipiagogos (Kindergarten teacher)	Educatore Professionale (Nursery educator)		
Master's degree (ISCED 7)							Maestra (Teacher)	
No formal qualification required		Barnskötare (Eng. Child Caregiver) *		Voithos Nipiagogou (Teacher Assistant)**				

Notes. \* They usually have a three-year vocational (integrated) education on a secondary level. This degree is also available through adult education; \*\* By law, no qualifications are needed. However, most of the time principals prefer to hire qualified teachers' assistants (bachelor's degree in the field of early childhood education, child care/ psychosocial and spiritual education of the child. Rarely they hire people with certificates or diplomas of tertiary (not university level) education (see more in additional information).

Additional country-specific information:

<sup>1</sup> In Sweden, according to the Swedish Education Act, 2:13, only staff with a certificate showing the qualification as a preschool teacher can be in charge of the position of a preschool teacher. Preschool teachers are responsible for educational development in ECEC groups (all ages). Statistics show that every preschool teacher (ISCED level 6) oversees 13 children on average. All staff included the average is 5 children per employee. In private settings there are fewer educated teachers, however, the Education Act states at least one educated teacher per setting who has the pedagogical responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> In Spain, the so-called Alternative pedagogy projects (i.e. free schools; <https://ludus.org.es/es/projects>) also exist, but do not have to fulfil the same requirements as the other types of schools.

## 4. Results

### **ECEC staff categories, including the minimum qualification levels for core staff categories**

A comparison of the ECEC staff categories in the main settings shows that two types of staff work in a group with children- core practitioners (teachers) and assistants (see table 2). A core practitioner (also known as a pedagogue, educator, childcare practitioner, pedagogical staff, preschool, kindergarten or early childhood teacher) is an individual who leads the practice for a group of children at the class- or playroom-level and works directly with children and their families. An assistant is an individual that supports the core practitioner with a group of children or class on a daily basis. The minimum qualification level for the core practitioners most commonly is a BA degree (ISCED 6) in preschool education or a similar field (e.g. Preschool Education in Slovenia, BA in Education, speciality in Child Education in Spain; Educational Sciences in Italy). In Slovenia and Cyprus, this is required for the entire preschool age and since 2019 also in Italy for younger groups (see table 3). In Italy, however, individuals working with older children even are required to have an ISCED 7 education (Primary Education Sciences).



## 4. Results

### **ECEC staff categories, including the minimum qualification levels for core staff categories**



In Spain, ISCED 6 is only needed for staff working with older children. In Sweden, preschool teacher education BA degree (ISCED 6) is required for the position as preschool teacher. For other core practitioners, the Education Act only states “sufficient education or experience to promote children’s development and learning” (2010: 800, 2:14). The holistic approach of education and care stated in the Education Act (2010:800, 8:2), however, requires the presence of preschool teachers as part of the core practitioners in an ECEC setting.

## 4. Results

Table 3. Minimum qualification levels required to become a core practitioner in main centre-based setting(s) according to top-level regulations, presented by age-divided settings (based on data from the questionnaire and European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019)

	0-3 years of age	3-6 years of age
Slovenia		ISCED 6
Sweden		X <sup>1</sup>
Spain	ISCED 5	ISCED 6
Cyprus		ISCED 6
Italy	ISCED 6 <sup>2</sup>	ISCED 7



Note: <sup>1</sup> = Secondo la Legge svedese sull'Istruzione, 2:13, solo il personale con un certificato che attesti la qualifica di insegnante di scuola dell'infanzia (ISCED 6) può essere incaricato della posizione di insegnante di scuola dell'infanzia, per gli altri operatori di base la legge sull'istruzione stabilisce "un'istruzione o un'esperienza sufficiente a promuovere lo sviluppo e l'apprendimento dei bambini" (2:14). Nel 2017 il 40,1% di tutto il personale impiegato negli asili aveva una laurea come "insegnanti di scuola dell'infanzia", mentre il 19,5% aveva un'istruzione secondaria per la cura dei bambini, il 29,6% non aveva qualifiche per lavorare con i bambini; statistiche nazionali di Skolverket, cfr. Commissione europea/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). <sup>2</sup> = nelle leggi del 2019/2020; in precedenza era una questione di autonomia regionale; ISCED 6 - Laurea o livello equivalente; ISCED 7 - Master o livello equivalente.



## 4. Results

To summarize, at the level of NEMO partnership, the required level of education for core ECEC practitioners varies from no regulation to ISCED 6 in Sweden, and ISCED 5 (Spain younger) to majority regulated at ISCED 6 (Slovenia, Spain older, Cyprus, Italy younger) and in one case even ISCED 7 (Italy older). Recent reforms show the direction of increasing the required level of education in ECEC; however, Spain in younger settings remains an exception.

However, even with the existing situation in the NEMO countries, it can be stated that NEMO countries can in general serve as good practices, particularly for the countries with minimum qualification level required to work as a core practitioner in either younger or older age group still below Bachelor's level (Czechia, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Austria, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom – Scotland).



## 4. Results

### Comparison of initial educational programmes

We have conducted the comparative analysis of the ECEC curricula for the following core staff categories: vzgojitelj/vzgojiteljica for Slovenia, Förskollärare for Sweden, Técnico Superior en Educación Infantil and Grado en Maestro de Educación Infantil for Spain, Nipiagogos for Cyprus, and Educatore Professionale and Maestra for Italy (see tables B and C). We have compared the regulations regarding the study programmes, aims, general competencies/learning outcomes, the main elements (e.g. title of the programme, provider, duration), the presence of topics (e.g. pedagogical/psychological topics, special didactics, school experience) and subjects/courses in the programmes



## 4. Results

### Aims and general competencies/learning outcomes



A comparison of the aims of the study programmes in the NEMO countries shows they are very similar. All of them in different words highlight the aim of preparing for the pedagogical/educational and care activities in the ECEC settings with children, families, colleagues (planning, implementing, evaluating; documentation), including subject-related competencies (preschool didactics), other key knowledge (i.e. psychology) and health issues. The aim is also to equip future ECEC teachers with theoretical and conceptual knowledge (i.e.

educational science core; this is less so in Spain for 0-3). In the case of Slovenia and Sweden, the preparation for further academic education toward a master's degree is also relevant. General competencies or learning outcomes stated in the programmes are aligned with these aims and are also similar across countries with a slightly different focus in each country.

## 4. Results

### **Main elements, the presence of topics and subjects/courses in the programmes**

The comparison of the main elements of the initial programmes for the core practitioners in the selected countries (table 4) shows, that it is mainly provided by the universities, and it takes from two to five years to finish it, most commonly from 3–4 years. It consists of 120 to 300 ECTS, most commonly from 180 to 240 ECTS. The most noticeable exceptions are Spain and Italy; in Spain, core practitioners for younger children have lower education requirements (ISCED 5, providers are professional training institutes) and in Italy, for older children, higher education requirements (ISCED 7) compared to other countries (ISCED 6). Before the year 2019, Italy also had no central level requirements (regional autonomy) for the practitioners working with younger children.

In each country, there are more providers of the educational programme required for the core practitioners. We chose one provider per country to analyse the study programme required for the core practitioners, i.e. Slovenia – University of Maribor, Sweden – Stockholm University, Spain – Ministry of Education / White Book, Cyprus – European University Cyprus, Italy – University of Bologna (see table 5). The national experts in the NEMO questionnaires reported that the programmes are quite similar across different providers.

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## 4. Results

### **Main elements, the presence of topics and subjects/courses in the programmes**

An in-depth analysis of the study programmes was conducted via comparison of the compulsory and elective subjects (see table 5). The subject/course titles were translated into the English language. This was followed by finding a higher-order common topic (i.e., Physical development and movement, Language and communication skills, Psychology, Methodology) to which subjects/courses could be assigned. Then a researcher went through all of the subjects/courses in the study programmes and assigned '1' to a specific common topic if the relevant course was present in the study programme. In the final step, common topics were grouped into overarching themes or areas (i.e., Special didactics). See Table 6 for detailed information about the subjects included in the initial education for the core staff in the different countries.

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The syllabi of core practitioners' study programmes are relatively similar, covering similar themes and (mainly) including study practice (exception is High Degree in Child education in Spain). The study programmes cover from 8 (Spain, 0-3) to 18 topics (Cyprus). The fact that the Spanish programme for core practitioners covers the least topics is expectable, it is the only ISCED 5 programme (others are ISCED 6 or 7); the shorter duration and lower ISCED level are reflected in the fewer topics covered in the programme. All programmes (7) cover Psychology and Pedagogy (general subjects), Language and communications skills and Special and inclusive education (special didactics). Methodology (general subject), Expressive arts and development of creativity (special didactics) and the school experience are included in all programmes (6), with the exception of the High Degree programme in Spain.

## 4. Results

Because the topic of Special and inclusive education is the focus of the NEMO project we have analysed it in more detail. Although it is included in all the study programmes, there are major differences in how the topic is addressed (numbers of subjects/courses, compulsory versus elective). The main differences can be seen in how many related subjects are included (i.e. Slovenia and Spain 0-3 have fewer; Spain 3-6 has more), how many of them are elective and how many obligatory (i.e. in Italy 0-3 are mostly elective, Spain 3-6 obligatory). Although several subjects are addressing special and inclusive education, there is no specific reference to ASD in any of the NEMO countries.



## 4. Results

Table 4. Main elements of the initial educational programmes for the core practitioners in the selected countries

	Slovenia	Sweden <sup>1</sup>	Spain	Cyprus	Italy		
	Vzgojitelj_ica (Preschool teacher)	Förskollärare (Preschool teacher)	Técnico Superior en Educación Infantil (Advanced technician in preschool education)	Grado en Maestro de Educación Infantil (Teacher of pre-primary education)	Nipiagogos (Kindergarten teacher)	Educatore Professionale <sup>2</sup> (Nursery educator)	Maestra (Kindergarten teacher)
Title of the programme/ training	Preschool education	Preschool teacher training programme	Training cycle: High degree on Child Education	B.A. on Education, speciality on Child Education	Early Childhood Education/ Pre-primary school teaching / Pre-Primary Education	Educational Sciences	Primary Education Sciences
Programme/training provider (Institution...)	Public universities (University of Ljubljana - UL, University of Maribor - UM, Univerza na Primorskem - UP)	20 Universities have the entitlement, by UKÄ, to award Degree of Bachelor of Arts in PreSchool Education.  <a href="#">List of Higher Education Institutions under the governance of The Swedish Council of Higher Education (2016)</a>	<a href="#">Professional Training Institutes Official program from the Ministry of education.</a>  <a href="#">All the centres giving this training in Spain.</a>	Dozens of Universities across the country.	European University Cyprus - EUC, University of Cyprus, University of Nicosia and Frederick University Cyprus	University	University
Type of the programme (BA, MA, Vocational...) and ISCED level	BA - 6	BA - 6: Degree of Bachelor of Arts in PreSchool Education, including vocational training (integrated)	Training Cycle - 5	BA - 6	BA - 6	Specific BA Program - 6	Specific MA Program - 7
Duration (in years)	3	3,5	2	4	4	3	5
ECTS	180	210	120	240	240	180	300

Notes: ECTS–European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. <sup>1</sup> = No minimal legal requirements; the study programme in the table is not required for the core practitioners working in the ECEC settings (only one per kindergarten is the requirement); <sup>2</sup> = in laws from 2019/2020; previously it was matter of regional autonomy.

## 4. Results

Table 5. Topics in the curriculum in the initial education for the core staff in centre-based settings in the selected countries

		Slovenia	Sweden	Spain	Cyprus	Italy	Σ	
	Title of the programme / Courses	Preschool education	Preschool teacher training programme	Training cycle: High degree in Child Education	B.A. on Education, speciality on Child Education	Early Childhood Education/Pre-primary school teaching / Pre-Primary Education	Education al Sciences	Primary Education Sciences
PEDAGOGICAL/ PSYCHOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE	Psychology	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
	Pedagogy	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
	Didactics	1	1					2
	Linguistics		1			1		2
	Methodology	1	1		1	1	1	6
SPECIAL DIDACTICS	Physical development and movement	1			1	1	1	5
	Expressive arts and development of creativity	1	1		1	1	1	6
	Language and communications skills	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
	Foreign language				1	1	1	4
	Reading literacy	1			1	1	1	5
	Numerical and logical reasoning	1	1		1	1	1	5
	Natural science/Understanding of the world	1	1		1	1		5
	Play		1	1		1		3
	Digital awareness					1	1	2
	Civic and democratic competences				1	1		2
	Special and inclusive education	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
	Health education			1	1	1		3
	Emotional, personal and social development		1	1		1	1	4
Family literacy	1					1	2	
Religion				1			1	
OTHER				1		1	1	3
SCHOOL EXPERIENCE		1	1		1	1	1	6
Σ		13	13	8	15	18	14	13

Notes. The curricula from the following institutions were analysed: Slovenia – University of Maribor, Sweden – Stockholm University, Spain – Ministry of Education / White Book, Cyprus – European University Cyprus, Italy – University of Bologna. 1 indicates that the analysed curriculum contains a specified topic – based on the course title(s).



## 4. Results

### Continuous professional development

In addition, to the comparison of initial education requirements for the core staff in the ECEC in the selected countries, we also provided a comparison of the CPD with a focus on the topic of autism. The main characteristics of the CPD in each country, institutions that provide CPD and information about the training content related to SEN with a focus on autism are compared.

#### **Description of mandatory courses, main content, methods and the minimum number of hours per year**



In Spain Continuing professional development is optional. There is specific continuing education during the first year directly in the workplace for those with B. A, after which the training is divided over a period of 6 years (with a minimum of 100 hours every six years) necessary to obtain an extra salary, but not mandatory. Those who have passed public exams and obtained their positions, must take a year of training specifically designed for their position.

In Sweden, it is the employer's obligation to provide CPD, while it is the employee's duty to attend employer-mandated courses. The content, methods and number of hours vary. Higher education CPD for the individual is optional. Formally, no further education is required; in practice, however, it is more often required because CPD is an occupational duty. CPD is provided as online courses, webinars, collegial learning through study circles, and as conferences.

## 4. Results

Special education teachers are a professional group who already have additional training from a 90-credit teaching certificate in addition to basic teacher education and three years of practice as a teacher in the school/preschool.

For the position of director of a preschool (a preschool district), additional specific higher education of 30 ECTS credits is required. The director must have formal director training, but does not have to be a preschool teacher.

The requirements and formalities for recruiting a first preschool teacher differ from municipality to municipality, and their title may also vary from employer to employer. Formally, no further education is required; in practice, however, it is more often required because the CDP is a professional duty. Recruitment depends on the availability of staff (Sweden is a country

with very remote areas with few inhabitants - although inhabitants have the same rights for 0- 6 preschool standards as elsewhere).

In Cyprus, Training workshops are organized by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute during the school year for all current staff working in public educational settings. The purpose of the workshops is to acquire additional professional skills and their attendance is mandatory. For in-service teachers, the minimum duration of compulsory CPD according to the high-level regulations is 10 hours per year.

## 4. Results

In Slovenia, CPD is mandatory as a professional duty and right. The collective agreement for education in the Republic of Slovenia determines the right of pedagogical staff to 5 days of in-service training per year or 15 days in three years.

Continuing education or CPD consists of professional training programs, thematic conferences, extraordinary programs, as well as project programs. It can also take the form of an update of existing training.

The content of CPD is very versatile as each year the Ministry of Education determines the priority themes and fields of CPD and announces a public call for proposals and co-financing of continuing development programs. Several institutions can apply with their CPD proposal and the programs are then selected and approved by the Ministry. There is a wide variety of choices for preschool teachers, including training on working with SEN children, some even specific to autism.

When participating in CPD, preschool teachers receive paid study leave and reimbursement for travel and participation expenses. In general, the decision of which CPD program to take is up to the preschool teacher.

In Italy, continuous training is made compulsory for childhood educators (0-3) by Law n 65 of 2017.

The Multi-year Action Plan (Piano di Azione Pluriennale) makes available each year financial resources that the Regions, through their programming, allocate to local authorities for CPD and the promotion of territorial pedagogical coordination (D.L. 65/2017).



## 4. Results

At the Nursery, there is no real career ladder, but a specific division of duties conferred by the preparation of the professional. The educator has a three-year degree (L-19), while the

Pedagogist has a five-year training: three years in L-19 + two years in LM-57. There is the possibility of attending courses for continuous professional development, but their attendance is not made mandatory by law.

The obligation of professional training and updating concerns all tenured teachers (Kindergarten, 3-6) who have a contract in public institutions, whether part-time or full time as provided by Law 107 of 2015 (Buona Scuola). The law does not provide a predefined amount of hours for training activities, the only constraint it places is that the training must be carried out during the teachers' service.



Therefore, the compulsory nature of the training is closely linked to the hourly service of the teachers, who therefore will not have to carry out the activities beyond the hours provided by the employment contract. The Ministry of Education is responsible for teacher training, at the national level, dictating the guidelines. Participation in training initiatives, included in special training courses, even individually, is communicated to the Administration by the manager concerned and is considered a useful service for all purposes.

## 4. Results

The obligation of professional training and updating concerns all tenured teachers (Scuola dell'Infanzia, 3-6) who have a contract in public institutions, whether part-time or full-time. It extends, without exception, to all orders and levels of education: preschool, elementary school and secondary school, first and second grade.

The school manager and the newly hired teacher establish, with a special pact for professional development, the objectives for the development of cultural, disciplinary, didactic- methodological and relational skills, to be achieved through specific training activities. There are 50 hours of training for each teacher. At the end of the training and probationary period, the Headmaster evaluates the teacher in training and probationary, after hearing the opinion of the committee for the evaluation of teachers and the tutor who followed the newly hired teacher. Therefore, the newly hired teacher is required to undergo initial continuing education.

The School Directors (at the School of Infancy for 3-6 years) are currently recruited by the Ministry of Education through a national open competition. The training and professional development of managers is a permanent method to ensure the constant adaptation of managerial skills to the evolution of the cultural, technological and organizational context of

reference and to encourage the consolidation of a managerial culture oriented to results and innovation.

Managers may choose to take part in training and refresher courses that are in any case in line with the objectives set out in the National Collective Labor Contract. To this end, the manager is granted a period of unpaid leave for study purposes for a maximum of three months within a year. Therefore, Continuing Education for Managers is optional.

## 4. Results

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

#### Mandatory or Optional:

A comparison of the above countries shows that Continuing Education for Teachers and Educators is made mandatory in Cyprus, Slovenia and partially in Italy. The Ministry of Education in Italy, in fact, has made Continuing Education mandatory only for permanent teachers in kindergarten (3-6 years).

The training for teachers of Scuola dell'Infanzia in Italy must be carried out during the teachers' service, so they will not have to carry out the activities beyond the hours foreseen by the employment contract. The school director and the newly hired teacher establish, with a special pact for professional development, the objectives for the development of cultural, disciplinary, didactic-methodological and relational skills, to be achieved through specific training activities.

In Sweden, on the other hand, it can be seen that CPD is optional, but at the same time while not formally required, in practice, it is more often required since CDP is a professional duty.

## 4. Results

### **Fruition and delivery of continuing education courses:**

Regarding the fruition of courses for Continuing Education in Spain, during the first year of service, they can be attended directly in the workplace for teachers with B. A. After the first year of service, however, the training is divided over a period of 6 years to receive an extra in salary. Finally, teachers who have obtained tenure through an open competition must take a year of training specifically designed for their position.

Therefore, Continuing Education in Spain can be characterized initially as a tool to learn the profession directly in the field, and in later years can be characterized as a tool to update professionals in the field who are thus rewarded and encouraged to continue professional development through the increase in salary. The courses are used in order to the type of

professional path that teachers have followed and therefore it can be deduced that continuing education is established in adherence to the prerequisites and the type of training that the teacher possesses at the time he or she enters the school.

In Italy, there is similar management regarding the entrance of new professionals and their initial probationary training. In fact, in Italy, the school headmaster (3-6) stipulates an agreement with the newly hired teacher, through a special pact for professional development, in which the objectives for the development of cultural, disciplinary, didactic-methodological and relational competencies are set, to be achieved through specific training activities. At the end of the training and probationary period, the Headmaster evaluates the teacher in training and probationary, after hearing the opinion of the committee for the evaluation of teachers and the tutor who followed the newly hired teacher. Therefore, the newly hired teacher is required to undergo initial continuing education.

## 4. Results

In Sweden, CPD is delivered as online courses, webinars, collegial learning through study circles, and as conferences whose content, methods and number of hours vary. It is the employer's obligation to provide Continuing Education for teachers who are thus required to attend employer-mandated courses.

In Cyprus, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute organizes training workshops during the school year for all in-service staff working in public education settings.

In Slovenia, it is the collective agreement for education in the Republic of Slovenia that determines the entitlement of pedagogical staff. Each year the Ministry of Education determines the priority themes and fields of CPD and announces a public call for proposals and co-funding of continuing development programs. Several institutions can apply with their CPD proposal and the programs are then selected and approved by the Ministry. Continuing education or CPD consists of professional training programs, thematic conferences, extraordinary programs, as well as project programs. There is a wide variety of choices for preschool teachers, including training on working with SEN children, some even specific to autism.



## 4. Results

In general, the decision of which CPD program to take rests with the preschool teacher who is entitled to paid study leave and reimbursement of travel and participation expenses. Study leave and reimbursement of expenses give Continuing Education professional value and allow

teachers to open themselves to new perspectives in order to carry out their work to the best of their ability in adherence to up-to-date knowledge in teaching and pedagogy. Also, in Italy, participation in training initiatives, included in special training courses (even individual ones) is considered a useful service to all intents and purposes; in fact, it is communicated to the Administration by the manager concerned. In Italy, it is the Miur (Ministry of Education) that deals with teacher training, at the national level, dictating the guidelines (3-6).

## 4. Results

### **The number of hours of Continuing Education Courses and Basic Training required of various educational professionals:**

In Spain, the years following the first year of service the training is divided over a period of 6 years with a minimum of 100.

In Sweden, the number of hours varies depending on the course the teacher decides to take. Special education teachers are a professional group that already has additional training from a teaching diploma of 90 credits in addition to the basic teacher training and three years of practice as a teacher in the school/preschool. The requirements and formalities for recruiting a first kindergarten teacher differ from municipality to municipality, and their title may also vary from one employer to another. Recruitment depends on the availability of staff as Sweden is a country with very remote areas with few inhabitants - although inhabitants have the same rights for 0-6 preschool standards as elsewhere. The case of Italy is different as it establishes 50 hours of mandatory Continuing Education for each permanent teacher at the Scuola dell'Infanzia (3-6 years). Regarding the recruitment of School Directors (at the Infancy School 3-6 years), however, they are currently recruited by the Ministry of Education through a national open competition. At the Nursery School (0-3 years), finally, there is no real career ladder, but a specific division of duties conferred by the preparation of the professional. The educator has a three-year degree (L-19), while the Pedagogist has a five-year training: three years in L-19 + two years in LM-57. In general, in ECEC services (0-3 in the split system and 0-6 in the integrated system) the annual CPD hours are distributed as follows, as we can see from the examples:

- 20 hours for Educators
- 40 hours for Pedagogical Coordinators

## 4. Results

In Cyprus for preservice teachers, the minimum duration of mandatory CPD under high-level regulations is 10 hours per year.

In contrast, for the position of director of a kindergarten (a preschool district), additional specific higher education of 30 ECTS credits is required. The director must have formal director training, but does not have to be a preschool teacher.

The collective bargaining agreement for education in the Republic of Slovenia determines the right of pedagogical staff to 5 days of in-service training per year or 15 days in three years.

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### **Public institutions (universities, colleges...) and private institutions (associations, training agencies, cooperatives...) involved in the CPD of Teachers and Educators.**

In Spain the institutions involved in the CPD of Teachers and Educators are:

- Teacher Training Centers belonging to the Department of Education of the Regional Government.
- Spanish Ministry of Education
- Universities In Sweden:

1) Universities/Higher Education- provide training for all teachers, at all levels. These are courses ordered and designed in accordance with municipal needs. They can be short-term CPD courses designed for a specific task, but they can also be comprehensive preschool (licensed) teacher training programs.

2) Government agencies that provide CPD such as the National Education Agency that provides online courses free of charge. Courses can be enrolled individually but most often are completed in collaboration with colleagues (supported by the local school administration); or the School Authority for Special Education (Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten: SPSM) which provides free online courses focused on special education development. SPSM can also arrange local meetings and consultations if requested.

3) Active teaching staff under the auspices of the local municipality: depending on qualifying resources, municipalities offer local CPD in specific areas.

4) Associations and cooperatives that provide CPD e.g. Professional Union of Teachers.

## 4. Results

All CPD is in line with the curriculum, school law and development intentions of the National Education Agency and the Swedish School Inspectorate. But also based on the profession's need for practical solutions and proven experiences.

In Cyprus are:

- European University of Cyprus
- University of Cyprus
- University of Nicosia
- University of Frederick
- Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus

In Slovenia, several institutions can apply with their CPD proposal and the programs are then selected and approved by the Ministry. These are a range of private and public institutions, from public universities, schools and kindergartens, Educational Research Institute, National Institute of Education and Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to private companies and individual owners (self-employed).

In Italy, the government, through Law 170/2016, has set the criteria that private training providers must meet in order to be accredited by Miur and see their courses recognized. At the same time, the SOFIA platform was established, in which all training courses valid for the fulfilment of the professional obligation are collected.

Schools, at the local level, are called to quantify the obligation in terms of Training Units (very similar to the CFU of degree courses), also indicating the valid activities to fulfil it (in-person and distance learning, documented educational experimentation, networking, personal and collegial study, documentation and forms of restitution and reporting, planning).

## 4. Results

With regard to tenured teachers, the Ministry of Education establishes the areas of updating. The Principal, within each institute, dictates the guidelines. Finally, the Board of Teachers elaborates (Collegio dei Docenti) all these indications and inserts specific training proposals within the Three-Year Plan of the Educational Offer. In all this system, however, a central role is always and, in any case, recognized to the freedom of the teacher. In no way can teachers be forced to participate in the training initiatives approved by the college. Their only duty is to achieve their goals. For the rest, they can freely choose "external" courses, as long as they are offered by accredited bodies.

The Ministry of Education annually defines the share of resources to be allocated to the updating and training of managers. (3-6 and mandatory school)

In Italy, thanks to D. L. 65/2017 CPD has become mandatory also for sectors 0-3 (as well as 0-6 in integrated systems). Every year the State allocates funds for CPD through the Action Plan. It exists the "National Fund for the Integrated System of education and Instruction.

In particular, the Fund's resources are intended as co-financing for regional planning of educational services for infants and services for infants and kindergartens are disbursed by the Ministry of Education directly to the municipalities after regional planning.

CPD is managed at Region level, for example:

In Lombardia this is one of the platforms for CPD thought for Educatori e Insegnanti (0-6), it's an association called "ASSONIDI" (example of a platform for CPD).

## 4. Results

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

In Spain, teacher and educator CPD courses are delivered by Training Centers funded by the Regional Government, the Spanish Ministry of Education, and the University. It is interesting how these training courses are national (Government) and how they are managed by formal training institutions such as the University and the Ministry of Education. This can be read as a strength that identifies continuing vocational training as a phase closely linked to the development of professional skills, not only at the moment of basic training that prepares workers for their entry into the working world but as a continuous accompaniment throughout the working career. The same can be said of Sweden. In Sweden, in fact, courses are provided by the University; by government agencies that provide CPD that provide free online courses; or by the "School Authority for Special Education" that provides free online courses focused on special education development. Interesting how in this case Sweden takes charge of special education at the school level by facilitating attendance through the free service. In addition, in Sweden, continuing education is promoted and delivered by the active educational staff under the auspices of the local municipality based on the qualification resources available to municipalities in specific areas. Finally, courses are also delivered by Associations and Cooperatives. In general, in Sweden, all CPD is in line with the curriculum, the school law and the development intentions of the National Education Agency and the Swedish School Inspectorate. But also based on the profession's need for practical solutions and proven

experiences. Therefore, Government and Local Authorities seem to be in strong connection to ensure good continuing education and continuing professional development.

## 4. Results

Similar to the Swedish example seems to be the situation in Slovenia. Indeed, Slovenia boasts several institutions that can apply their CPD proposal and programs to the Ministry, which then selects and approves. These are a range of private and public institutions, from public universities, schools and kindergartens, the Institute for Educational Research, the National Institute of Education, and the Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to private businesses and individual owners (self-employed).

Also, in Italy, continuing education is managed at the national level by the government, which has established the criteria that private training providers must meet in order to be accredited by the Ministry of Education and to have their courses recognized. At the same time, the SOFI platform has been established, in which all the training courses valid for the fulfilment of the professional obligation are collected.

The Ministry of Education (Miur) annually defines the share of resources to be allocated to updating and training managers, in addition, the same Miur is responsible for establishing the areas of updating permanent teachers. Continuing education for tenured teachers is highly regulated in Italy, so much so that continuing education is a fundamental trait and an integral part of a teacher's job (3-6) are collected. On the other hand, as regards the 0-3 and 0-6 segments, it is also managed at the regional level through the 2017 law by means of funds that local authorities manage at the local level. Fondo Nazionale zero sei provides funding for Piano di azione and are disbursed by the Ministry of Education directly to municipalities after regional planning. (0-3 years and 0-6 in integrated system)

## 4. Results

CPD is an expense that falls under these national funds (Law n. 107/2015). Funds are disbursed periodically by the Ministry of Education, but are divided among the various Regions of Italy based on their number of services and internal organization.

In Cyprus, the courses are mainly provided by the European University of Cyprus, the University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Frederick and the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. It can be seen that continuing education is the responsibility of the Institutional Body that not only trains future professionals but also takes care of ongoing training and continuing education. This is common to all European countries that have joined the NeMo project.



## 4. Results

### **Specific CPD training related to autism and approaches presented, contents and main themes.**

In Spain, specific CPD Training related to autism is represented by the following interventions:

- Early intervention in autism according to the Denver model
- Early intervention in autism after the ImPACT project
- Structured teaching in autism spectrum disorders
- Bullying prevention in autism spectrum disorders
- Digital media for students with autism spectrum disorders
- Alternative and augmentative communication systems in ASD

Official Documents reporting the major themes and continuums are as follows:

- Childhood Education Teaching Specialties (national in scope);
- Child education personnel in private schools (national in scope);
- Early Childhood Education Personnel in the First Cycle (0-3 years) (regional).

In Sweden, teaching materials and courses for inclusive education in kindergarten are provided by the School Authority for Special Education. These courses promote equality and inclusive education in kindergarten and it is the director who decides which courses are needed as he/she is held responsible for the quality of the kindergarten and therefore, within a given framework, has a special responsibility to provide this. Inspections by the Swedish School Inspectorate are the (effective) means of promoting continuing education for staff.

## 4. Results

### **Specific CPD training related to autism and approaches presented, contents and main themes.**

There is no CPP designed specifically for special education teachers in kindergarten, however, the Spsm (the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools) supports with courses and consultations for the development of knowledge and practice in special needs issues in schools and kindergartens in Sweden for staff in general.

- Special Education School Authority is a government authority with supporting tasks - to support the development of special education needs in Swedish school systems (to help schools and kindergartens meet national requirements and educational goals). All services are free of charge. The support can be short-term advice, but also support longer-term development (of services).

## 4. Results

### **Specific CPD training related to autism and approaches presented, contents and main themes.**

- The Autism and Asperger's Association is a non-governmental organization that works to create better conditions for children, youth and adults with autism, Asperger's syndrome and other autism-like conditions.
- Riksförbundet Attention - This is an interest organization with the purpose of informing and supporting children with neuropsychiatric disabilities.
- Attention Utbildning AB is the training centre and provides knowledge about neuropsychiatric disabilities especially to support professionals in the area.
- The Dyslexia Association is a disability association that brings together people with reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia, people with math difficulties/dyscalculia, their relatives, parents and other interested parties. The association assists with courses and consultations and promotes the dissemination of language disorders and dyslexia.
- Språkförskolan: The language kindergarten is an organization that accepts children with severe primary language disorders. Primary language disorder means that the child does not have other disabilities such as a hearing problem or a developmental disorder that could explain the language disorder. In order to come to a speech-language preschool, you must have a referral from a speech-language pathologist. The child attends Språkförskolan for about 3 hours a day (also provides integrated language support therapy for children with Swedish as a second language)
- Finally, Habilitation & Health (Habilitering och hälsa) - is an organization that belongs to the Swedish health system (not education) that provides counselling, support and treatment to children and adults with disabilities. "Habiliteringen" also provides counselling and support to relatives and staff. The services of "Habiliteringen" are closely linked to the needs of individual children.

## 4. Results

### **Specific CPD training related to autism and approaches presented, contents and main themes.**

In Cyprus, CPD in autism can be from:

#### 1. Master's Degree/Postgraduate Programs

There are currently three MA programs in the field of special and inclusive education offered by Cypriot universities. These programs offer a couple of elective courses each that include ASD.

#### 2. Seminars and workshops of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute for In-Service Professional Development for Special and General Educators

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, which is the main public agency responsible for in-service training, may offer mandatory or optional seminars and workshops (short, one-day or longer, up to 5 days) both specific to ASD (e.g., special approaches such as ABA, TEACCH, PECS and other communicative approaches) and more generally on special and inclusive education that may include references to ASD.

#### 3. Individual initiatives by private associations/companies and NGOs:

Private companies, representatives of particular approaches (e.g., Pyramid Educational Consultants representing PECS), or NGOs (e.g., parent associations) may organize and offer seminars and workshops for educators and/or parents on specific topics related to ASD.

#### 4. Training activities and research projects funded by the EU and others

CPD opportunities may also be offered as part of EU and other funded project activities. For example, Erasmus+ projects (KA1, KA2 & KA3) specifically targeting ASD may include training for teachers and/or parents and/or other professionals and pilot implementation.

## 4. Results

### **Specific CPD training related to autism and approaches presented, contents and main themes.**

In Slovenia there are several training options for working with SEN children, some even specifically for autism, e.g. Educational Strategies and Challenging Learning Environment for Children and Adolescents with Autistic Disorder (16 hours), Child and Adolescent with Autistic Disorder (16 hours), Structured Learning as a Method of Success in Teaching Children with Autistic Disorders (16 hours), Working with pre-schoolers with autism (8 hours).

In Italy, autism is managed at the national level through the publication of the Guidelines for Autism proposed in Law 134/2015 (Ddl Autismo) approved by the Hygiene and Health Commission of the Senate. The law deals with updating the essential levels of care, with the inclusion, with regard to autism spectrum disorders, of early diagnosis, care and individualized treatment, through the use of methods and tools based on the most advanced scientific evidence available. The regions and autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano guarantee the functioning of health services for persons with autism spectrum disorders, may identify reference centers with the task of coordinating these services within the regional health

network and the autonomous provinces, establish diagnostic, therapeutic and care pathways for minors, adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders, verifying their evolution, and adopt appropriate measures to achieve certain intervention objectives.

In Italy, there is still no specific mandatory training for nursery educators with methodologies for taking charge of children with autism at the educational level. The educator has already accumulated training credits through the L-19 degree in pedagogy, but there is still no specific and mandatory CPD training related to autism.

In Italy, there are optional training courses that educators can decide to attend to specialize in autism. These are regional courses designed by associations or other entities limited to a specific region of Italy (0-6 years).

## 4. Results

### **Specific CPD training related to autism and approaches presented, contents and main themes.**

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

In Spain, specific CPD Training related to autism is represented by several interventions based on Early Intervention in Autism according to the Denver Model, following the ImPACT project; Structured Teaching in Autism Spectrum Disorders; Bullying Prevention in Autism Spectrum Disorders; Digital Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders; and Alternative and Augmentative Communication Systems in ASD. These modes of intervention are supported by some official Documents that report the main themes and contents which are Child Education Teaching Specialties (of national character); Child Education staff in privateschools (of national character) and finally Child Education staff in the first cycle (0-3 years) (of regional character). It is interesting to underline how the theme of disability is taken care of at the regional level and how, on the other hand, for the more delicate band of children from 0 to 3 years of age, autism is managed at the regional level. It may be deduced that the difference between the national and regional levels may be due to Spain's desire to adapt the interventions on the youngest children according to the conditions of the context of reference traceable in the Region to which the child with autism belongs, and thus as an act of attention on the part of the State.

## 4. Results

### **Specific CPD training related to autism and approaches presented, contents and main themes.**

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

In Sweden, teaching materials and courses for inclusive education in kindergarten are provided by the "School Authority for Special Education". The principal decides which courses are needed as he is held responsible for the quality of the kindergarten. Inspections by the Swedish School Inspectorate are an (effective) tool to promote continuous staff training.

There is no CPP designed specifically for special education teachers in kindergarten, however, the Spsm supports with courses and consultations for the development of knowledge and practice in special needs issues in schools and kindergartens in Sweden for staff in general. In addition, there are several governmental authorities with supporting tasks; non-governmental associations that work to improve contexts where people with autism can live to their full potential; interest organizations with the aim of informing and supporting children with neuropsychiatric disabilities; training centers that provide knowledge about neuropsychiatric disabilities especially to support professionals in the area; organizations that belong to the Swedish health system (and not to education) provide advice, support and treatment to children and adults with disabilities while also providing advice and support to relatives and staff. Sweden can be said to place a great deal of emphasis on training educators, teachers, and families in the management of people with autism. In addition, Sweden is particularly attentive to the social and educational needs of people with autism, and seeks to include people with autism in school and social settings, taking great care to ensure that the setting is appropriate.

## 4. Results

### **Specific CPD training related to autism and approaches presented, contents and main themes.**

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

The same considerations can also be made of Cyprus as Sweden. In Cyprus, in fact, CPD in autism can be from Masters and postgraduate university programs; Seminars and workshops of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute for in-service professional development for special and general educators. These Training Institutions collaborate with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, which is the main public agency responsible for in-service training, to deliver seminars and workshops both specific to ASD (e.g. special approaches such as ABA, TEACCH, PECS and other communicative approaches) and more generally on special and inclusive education that may include references to ASD.

In addition, there are a number of private associations/companies and NGOs such as private companies, representatives of particular approaches (e.g., Pyramid Educational Consultants representing PECS) or NGOs (e.g., parent associations) may organize and offer seminars and workshops for educators and/or parents on specific topics related to ASD; training activities and research projects funded by the EU and others.

CPD opportunities may also be offered as part of EU and other funded project activities. For example, Erasmus+ projects (KA1, KA2 & KA3) specifically targeting ASD may include training for teachers and/or parents and/or other professionals and pilot implementation



## 4. Results

### **Specific CPD training related to autism and approaches presented, contents and main themes.**

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

Also, in Slovenia there are several training options for working with SEN children, some even specifically for autism, e.g. Educational Strategies and Stimulating Learning Environment for Children and Adolescents with Autistic Disorder, Child and Adolescent with Autistic Disorder, Structured Learning as a Method of Success in Teaching Children with Autistic Disorders, Working with Preschoolers with Autism.

In Italy, autism is managed at the national level through the publication of the Guidelines for Autism by the Senate Commission on Hygiene and Health. The purpose of the guidelines is to update the essential levels of care, with the inclusion, with regard to autism spectrum disorders, of early diagnosis, care and individualized treatment, through the use of methods and tools based on the most advanced scientific evidence available.

The regions and autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano guarantee the functioning of health services for persons with autism spectrum disorders, may identify reference centers with the task of coordinating these services within the regional health network and the autonomous provinces, establish diagnostic, therapeutic and care pathways for minors, adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders, verifying their evolution, and adopt appropriate measures to achieve certain intervention objectives.

## 4. Results

### **Specific CPD training related to autism and approaches presented, contents and main themes.**

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

In Italy, there is still no specific mandatory training for nursery educators with methodologies for taking charge of children with autism at the educational level. The educator has already accumulated training credits through the L-19 degree in pedagogy, which includes subjects with a pedagogical orientation for the care of disabilities in general.

In Italy, there are optional training courses that educators can decide to attend in order to specialize in autism. These courses are regional and designed by associations or other entities limited to a specific region of Italy (0-6 years). From what emerges, it can be said that, like the other European countries that have joined the NeMo Project, Italy is showing attention to the creation of inclusive and open socio-educational contexts.

# 5. Recommendations

## For a pre-primary teachers' curricula for a unified system ISCED0 (0 – 6 years)

The comparative report served us as a baseline to prepare recommendations for a unified pre-primary European teacher curriculum while adding relevant data from other intellectual outputs prepared in the NEMO project.

In all NEMO project countries, the university is one of the most important training agencies; as far as other training courses are concerned, Italy is partly similar to Slovenia. In fact, in both countries, the content of CPD is very versatile and different institutions can present their own CPD proposal.

IOI could be included in optional courses based on observation in 0-3 services. Observation is a very important skill required of educators in Italy to guarantee quality (Orientamenti nazionali per i servizi educativi per l'infanzia, 2022). It could be used several times to observe the same child at different times after a few months to assess the situation of doubt and determine whether the case can be brought to the attention of experts. The peculiarity of the Nemo tool is that it confirms doubts and specifies them, describing the area in which they focus, to facilitate a more precise request. Video support is recommended to reduce the difficulty in observation due to the continuous movement of the children. The observation format provided by the tool is also considered useful and the paper observation grid is recommended as Italian nurseries do not have wi-fi and prefer paper (also easier to use).

# 5. Recommendations

## For a pre-primary teachers' curricula for a unified system ISCED0 (0 – 6 years)

It is recommended that the IO3 instrument be used for children between the ages of 3 and 6 for the purpose of learning and conducting a final observation. It could be included in 50 hours for each permanent teacher at 3-6 years schools. Moreover, as it has the characteristic of being self-built, it can be used to monitor the child's performance.

By integrating the two IO1 and IO3 instruments, one could think of creating an all-around training package for the initial, in progress and final observation of the child in the 0-6 system. They could be included as part of initial staff training (a three-year degree course by the University) and as CPD (within 20 hours of continuing education courses for Educators) in the framework of atypical development and the identification of children's needs.

In Italy, it also could be included in specific regional training courses for educators promoted by associations accredited by the Government and it could be complemented by other systematic observation tools that currently exist.

The content would be the initial observation of the young child at the time of his/her inclusion in the nursery. Both the 0-3 Guidelines and the 0-6 Pedagogical Guidelines (Linee Guida Pedagogiche, 2021) can become the framework for IO1 in line with the idea of continuity and in line with the purpose of an integrated system.

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# NEW MONITORING

## GUIDELINES TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE ECEC TEACHERS CURRICULA



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