THE 5TH BALTIC INTER-MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE: ESTONIA AND LITHUANIA

"Developing multicultural competence and language awareness in teacher education"

Vilnius, 18 September 2019

Report

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1. Policy priorities and/or reform opportunities in Estonia and Lithuania

In Estonia and Lithuania increasing numbers of newly arrived migrants and returning nationals has emphasized the importance of an inclusive education system. Furthermore, long-living cultural minorities in both countries contribute to the diverse linguistic and cultural landscape in the region. This calls for policymakers and education institutions to take specific measures to facilitate the integration of children with a migrant background. The education systems in Estonia and Lithuania face several challenges related to migrant education. One of them is uneven school preparedness to address the needs of diverse learners and teachers lacking competences and skills to deal with diversity in the classroom. The latter aspect is of utmost importance as the success of migrant inclusion in education system in many ways relies on pedagogues and professional support staff in schools. Thus, a growing number of newly arrived immigrants and returnees highlights the importance of multicultural competence and language awareness to be introduced systematically in teacher education programmes. This has become an important policy priority in both Estonia and Lithuania, though the issue has been addressed inconsistently to date.

Both Estonia and Lithuania have undergone various reforms in higher education and teacher training over the past years. However, in Lithuania, the higher education reform did not yield the desired results. Even though the Lithuanian University of Education Sciences (LEU), which was the key HEI preparing future teachers, was reorganised and merged with Vytautas Magnus University (VDU) and a set of Education Academies, now in charge of teacher training, were created across Lithuania (at the premises of other HEIs)[1], the content and quality of the educational programmes for teachers have barely changed (even though ranked very poorly previously). Furthermore, Lithuania has not adopted a comprehensive and clear framework of teachers´ multilingual and multicultural competences. Lithuanian policy documents do not explicitly require initial teacher education (ITE) universities and colleges to introduce courses that prepare future teachers for diversity. However, ordinance of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania 'On the approval of Description of the Study Area of Education and Training' for ITE curricula do stipulate that prospective teachers should be able to develop a tolerant learning environment. This document also states that teachers should be able to adapt to the individual differences of learners stemming from the differences in gender, language, culture, ethnicity or social environment. Moreover, the national competency framework for teachers highlights the importance of teachers' intercultural competences, including those related to ethnic/national identity of learners. However, due to ITE institutions' academic, administrative and financial autonomy they have leeway in translating these provisions into courses and programmes. In practice, ITE curricula across Lithuanian universities and colleges do not explicitly seek to develop multicultural competences. Thus, teacher preparation for diversity depends on the choice and dedication of study module academic staff. As a result, specific diversity-related courses are, in most cases, not mandatory, while institutions lack relevant elective courses as well. One of the exceptions was Master's in Intercultural Education and Mediation programme offered by Šiauliai University. The programme included mandatory courses on 'Intercultural psychology' (6 ECTS) and 'Intercultural consulting' (5 ECTS)[2]. However, the programme has been discontinued.

Due to unclear outcomes of the higher education reform in Lithuania, it is not feasible to indicate whether linguistically responsive and culturally sustainable (LRCS) pedagogy has been included in the development of a new teacher education curriculum. Nevertheless, representatives from Vytautas Magnus University have indicated that currently the university is aiming to include teachers' preparation to address diversity and inclusive education in the university´s agenda. They have identified the need to develop linguistically responsive and culturally sustainable pedagogy in initial teacher training and in-service teacher training. The latter is particularly intended to support the older generation of pedagogues. Furthermore, according to the representatives from the Lithuanian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the ordinance of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania 'On the approval of the Description of Teachers profession competence' (adopted in 2007) is currently being

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[1] Caturianas, D., Budraitis, M. (2019). 'Assessment of the ongoing reforms in higher education in Lithuania', *NESET Ad hoc report no. 3/2019*.

[2] European Commission (2017) 'Study on How Initial Teacher Education prepares student teachers to deal with Diversity in the Classroom Country Profile: Estonia'. PPMI.

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revised. Various stakeholders, including representatives from the Education academies, were invited to take part in the drafting process. As the document is in its drafting phase, the Ministry representatives highlighted that the present Sirius round table was a useful contribution to this process by bringing the importance of linguistically and culturally responsive pedagogies to the attention of the Ministry and mapping various participants´ positions on this topic.

Similarly to Lithuania, in the context of large professional autonomy, the universities (University of Tartu and Tallinn University) that provide teacher education programmes are autonomous in designing the curriculum according to the national regulation, which emphasizes inclusive education but does not refer specifically to linguistically responsive and culturally sustainable pedagogy. It must be noted that the qualification requirements for teachers are different in Estonia and Lithuania. While in Lithuania the bachelor's degree is required, Estonia has set a Master´s Degree standard. Currently, the preparation for teaching in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms in teacher training modules is not consistent in Estonia. At the University of Tartu, multicultural competence is supported through achievements of a few study outcomes in two different subjects that are obligatory for all teacher training students. One of the study outcomes is ability to describe various opportunities to consider multicultural aspects in educational organisation. Vocational education teacher students have obligatory course "Multicultural education". There is an elective course "A Student with a Different Language of Instruction in Estonian School" (Muukeelne laps Eesti koolis") for teacher students. Similarly, the approach is unsystematic in Tallinn University where each institute decides on the curriculum content and the presence of multicultural competence. The courses about special needs education (including both theoretical and practical perspectives) are compulsory in all ITE programmes[3]. Moreover, the practical training during the school placement is considered as a priority in the development of the ITE[4].

The induction stage also reflects diversity-related issues within the face-to-face or e-training sessions between novice teachers and mentors. In Estonia the ITE providers offer specific training programmes or courses, for instance[5]:

- at the University of Tartu in 2019/2020 the following three bachelor's programmes: Teaching Humanities and Social Subjects in Basic School; Teaching Natural and Exact Sciences at Lower Secondary School and Teacher of Vocational School include the 3 ECTS course 'Diversity in Education';
- the Tallinn University offers a 4 ECTS course for school mentors and international school leadership programme Education 4 Future. The programme focuses on strategic partnerships, school culture, communication with parents, digitalisation of the learning process[6].

Table 1. Comparison of ITE in Estonia and Lithuania against key indicators

Estonia	Lithuania
Attractiveness of the teacher profession • Only 4% of high school graduates are interested in becoming a teacher[7]. • The profession is characterised with gender imbalance and ageing workforce[8].	**Attractiveness of the teacher profession** • Declining overall number of teachers: about 20% decrease from 2009/2010 (40,745) to 2014/2015 (32,243)[12]; • Ageing teacher workforce: In 2014/2015 about 47% of the total teacher population was 50-64 years old and only 9% was below 34 years old.

[3] European Commission (2017) 'Study on How Initial Teacher Education prepares student teachers to deal with Diversity in the Classroom Country Profile: Estonia'. PPMI.

[4] European Commission (2017) 'Study on How Initial Teacher Education prepares student teachers to deal with Diversity in the Classroom Country Profile: Estonia'. PPMI.

[5] European Commission (2017) 'Study on How Initial Teacher Education prepares student teachers to deal with Diversity in the Classroom Country Profile: Estonia'. PPMI.

[6] Education 4 Future 2015 in a Nutshell (2016). Available at: http://www.tlu.ee/et/hik/Education4Future/E4F-2015.

[7] Mägi, E.; Nestor, M. (2012). Koolilõpetajad ja nende karjäärivalikud. Praxis

[8] OECD (2016) Education Policy Outlook: Estonia. Available at: http://www.oecd.org/estonia/Education-Policy-Outlook-Country-Profile-Estonia.pdf. Accessed 18.10.2016

[12] Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), *Lietuvos švietimas skaičiais 2015: Bendrasis ugdymas* [Lithuanian education in numbers 2015: general education], Centre of Information Technologies in Education, 2015.; Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), ITC Education Management Information System. Available at: http://svis.emokykla.lt/lt/index/wpage. Accessed 24.10.2016

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- On average, the ratio of teacher's salary to other full-time workers' with tertiary education is 64%[9]. - The enrolment rates in ITE have been diminishing: In 1995, 10% of student population were in teacher education programmes, but only 6.3 % in 2015[10]. **Organisation of ITE** - The main components of ITE are: (1) studies in general education; (2) study related to a specific subject(s) or a specialty; (3) professional studies (60 ECTS, including educational sciences, psychology and subject didactics and pedagogical traineeship at least 10 weeks); and (4) final thesis or examination of the relevant higher education level that includes pedagogical research. - For pre-school teachers and vocational education teachers, a bachelor's degree is the minimum requirement; all other teachers should have a master's degree or its equivalent. - Teacher educators should complete at least a 6 ECTS course in educational sciences in postgraduate or doctoral level or in-service training for at least 160 hours total[11].	- The profession is marked by gender imbalance: in 2014, 94% of teachers in ISCED 1, 84% in ISCED 2, and 83% in ISCED 3 were women[13]. - The teaching profession does not attract high achieving students and teacher salaries are among the lowest in Europe[14]. **Organisation of ITE** - There is no official requirement for structured induction programmes. - Minimum length of in-school placement for teacher students (ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3) is 800 hours (30 ECTS). - Minimum required level of ITE: Bachelor's level for primary, secondary and upper secondary teachers. - At least 30% of teacher educators in universities should have practical pedagogical experience of at least three years; teacher educators should update their scientific and/or pedagogical competences regularly[15].

Source: European Commission (2017) 'Study on How Initial Teacher Education prepares student teachers to deal with Diversity in the Classroom Country Profile: Estonia'. PPMI.

Overall, while the life-long learning strategy and general agreement on the need to address teacher preparedness to work with diversity is present both in Estonia and Lithuania and is addressed in policy documents mostly through the emphasis on inclusive education, the linguistically responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogy should be enhanced. Ongoing discussions and strategy planning at the ministerial levels in both Estonia and Lithuania represent a window of opportunity for SIRIUS to feed into the process.

2. *The key focus of the Baltic inter-ministerial round table*

The key focus of the Baltic workshop in 2019 was to contribute to the **improvement of initial teacher education in Estonia and Lithuania to better reflect the needs of multilingual and multicultural classrooms**. During the round table participants identified the measures and next steps that would facilitate the implementation of policy priorities in this area. Supporting the discussion with successful experience and lessons learnt in the area was Dr Jenni Alisaari from Turku University. She introduced the recent Finnish curriculum reform related to linguistically responsive and culturally sustainable pedagogy and its implications for teacher education. She further engaged LT and EE stakeholders into discussion reflecting on how Finnish experience can be useful for the Baltic context and assisted in identifying various key stakeholders and key actions in the process of enhancing the quality of initial and in-service teacher education in EE and LT.

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[9] Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 (2014). Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. Available at: https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/estonian_lifelong_strategy.pdf. Accessed 18.10.2016

[10] Ministry of Education and Research (2015). Annual analysis by the Ministry of Education and Research 2015 Summary

[11] Framework Requirements for Teacher Training (2000, renewed in 2015). *Riigi Teataja (State Gazette)*, 18.08.2015, 10.

[13] Ibid

[14] European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice. *Key Data on Teachers and School Leaders in Europe*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2013

[15] Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (MoES), 'On the approval of Description of the Study Area of Education and Training', Ordinance of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, No V-1264, 2015.

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One of the main conclusions from the 2018 Baltic workshop 'Validation of prior learning of newly arrived migrant students' was that a prerequisite for successful validation and evaluation of prior migrant's learning is teachers´ multicultural competence and teachers´ capacity to work in multilingual and multicultural settings. This would strengthen teachers´ capacity to work in multilingual and multicultural settings and enable them effectively to apply various linguistically responsive and culturally sustaining (LRCS) pedagogical techniques and tools available. It was emphasized that understanding of thematic conceptions and theoretical background is equally important.

Systematic integration of diversity content into teacher training curricula helps prepare teachers more holistically for working in diverse classrooms. Introduced within all initial teacher education degree programmes, transversal modules on multiple aspects of diversity such as multilingualism and multiculturalism represent an integrated way to infuse diversity throughout the curriculum[16]. This approach helps to make diversity a common issue, without limiting it to a particular initial teacher education pathway or a separate group of teachers. It was established during the Baltic roundtable 2018 that understanding of thematic conceptions and theoretical background should frame the LRCS pedagogical approach. At the same time, in order to improve teacher education in the Baltics, the outcomes of recent higher education reforms, good practice examples and opportunities for intra-sector cooperation between different stakeholders should be analysed.

In 2019 Baltic round table, it was yet again confirmed that currently there is no systematic assessment tool for migrant and returnee children which could help to identify their prior learning achievements. Every teacher and/or school has to invent their own tool ad hoc. Evaluation of the situation demonstrates a need for a standardized assessment and evaluation procedure and/or services[17]. As Estonian and Lithuanian school professionals enjoy great professional autonomy, the dilemma of 'may and must' need to be solved by the creation of a standardise set of mechanisms and tools that can be adjusted according to the specific needs in order to support teachers to best respond to the needs of new comers and equip them with knowledge on how rich resources of diverse students in the class can be used for learning.

The Finnish curriculum reform and revision of initial teacher education in this context served as an inspirational experience providing elements and lessons learnt that can be used in the Baltic system. Jenni Alisaari presented some effective measures how to re-design teacher education to achieve systematic training in LRCS pedagogy. The pedagogy is based on the approach that every child has the right to use any language he or she knows and inclusive approach to education by maintaining various sides of identity. Similarly, to Estonia and Lithuania, initial teacher education in Finland is based on freedom and autonomy of higher education institutions. Thus, universities have flexibility in addressing the ITE guidelines. In Finland, one of the push factors for comprehensive teacher education reform was a large-scale national project initiated and financed by the Ministry of Education - DivEd focusing on initial teacher education and in-service training of teachers, aiming to link LRCS with curricular reform. Jenni emphasized the importance of systematic guidance and mentoring in the process and long-term vision of the Ministry in this regard. One of the interesting and key success factors of effective implementation of DivEd is that all the capacity building activities for teachers are held in schools, which ensures greater outreach and training of the whole school community.

Clear policy discourse and guidelines at the national level are also an important factor for successful implementation of the inclusive education. The table below summarises on how the view of diversity and multilingualism has changed in the new curricula in Finland.

Curricular areas	2004	2014
Value for language in education	National and local minority languages should have been taken into account	Languages are seen as part of human rights, and multilingualism is seen as a resource for learning.

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[16] European Commission (2017), Preparing teachers for diversity: the role of initial teacher education. PPMI.

[17] Eve Mägi and Hanna Siarova (2018). The 4th Inter-ministerial Round Table on Migrant Education Policy Partnership "Mapping prior learning". PPMI & PRAXIS.

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Theory of learning	Language was not mentioned	Language is seen as an essential part of thinking and learning
Main responsibility of education	Every student's linguistic identity and development of first language were to be supported	Students are supported to become versatile and talented language users in their first languages as well as in other languages. Students are encouraged to interact with even minor language skills. Multiliteracies is seen as an important skill.
Schools' Operating Culture	Language was not mentioned	Language awareness is one of its main aspects
Special issues related to language and culture	No introductory text regarding to multilingualism or language awareness. Maintenance of traditional cultures and languages was seen important.	The aim is in instructing students to value linguistic and cultural diversity, and advocate for bi- and multilingualism and thus strengthen the language awareness and metalinguistic skills of the students.
Assessment	Minor change in terminology	

Source: Developed by Jenni Alisaari 2019.

3. Key discussion points

I. **It takes a network of professionals to implement linguistically responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogy in teacher education curriculum: university teachers as main implementors, researchers and external experts in supporting roles, while policy makers from ministries lead by steering and supporting, not controlling**

Who is the lead and who is supporting role in the development of linguistically responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogy in teacher education curriculum? What triggers the change in the context of autonomy? What is the goal of the development process?

The main goal of the curriculum renewal in Finland was ensuring multiliteracy that all students should be able to use their whole linguistic repertoire for the purpose of learning, every teacher is a language teacher and every student is encouraged to value diversity and make every language valuable. The policy makers from EE and LT agreed with this direction of the reform, though acknowledged that education vision and policy documents in both countries are not that comprehensive in embracing diversity. A follow-up question was raised whether there is a political agreement that ability to work with diversity can be included in the list of teacher's competencies in Lithuania? The policy-makers present marked that there is no political opposition regarding the inclusion of the ability to work with diversity in the list of teachers competencies, and, in fact, were grateful to have taken part in this discussion, which will feed into the drafting of the new teacher competence framework. The Estonian representative emphasized the principle guiding the national curriculum in Estonia that every teacher is a language teacher and should therefore understand diversity.

While the context of life-long learning and general agreement of the need to address teacher preparedness to work with diversity is present both in Estonian and Lithuanian policy documents and the legislative level support appears to be largely addressed, the process of development LRCS pedagogy in teacher training takes a network of various stakeholders and initiative from the state level policy makers to be implemented.

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In order to reach the stated goals, several approaches were suggested. First, the development process could be led by a working group of various stakeholders. For instance, the working group consists of researchers, experienced and young teachers and university teacher trainers and academics. Policy makers from the Ministry need to initiate the process and take part in quality assurance activities. Researchers and teacher trainers are key in this process too, as they have a macro-level understanding of a country context and practicing teachers can share their experience and observations. In the context of the Baltic states it was also considered to invite external experts in multicultural and multilingual pedagogies on board, who could bring more in-depth knowledge and international evidence into the process of teacher training curricula revision.

An important step discussed during the workshop is the need to concentrate more thoroughly on the renewal of pedagogical philosophy based on the principle that every teacher is a language teacher. Universities with their teacher trainers, researchers and curriculum developer teams could be the main implementors of the reform, but less likely the only leaders. Policy makers from the ministry are expected to initiate this change, for instance, by renewing standards for teacher competences. At the same time, it is important to have a clear vision at ministerial level how to promote the attractiveness and quality of teacher education. It was suggested that motivating the implementation of LRCS pedagogy in the curriculum goes together with increasing attractiveness of the teaching profession. The latter can, for instance, be promoted by the media campaigns related to teacher profession. Thus, a network approach was found as the best solution for the renewal process - the partnership that facilitates cooperation between university teachers and researchers, teacher training academies (in Lithuanian case), policy makers from the ministries and external experts to equip with additional competence.

Illustrated by the example of Finland who has implemented development of LRCS pedagogy in the teacher education curriculum, the initiator of the reform process has been the Finnish Ministry of Education. More specifically, the ministry has provided funding and renewed the concept of teachers´ professional development. The main role of the ministry was to lead by steering not controlling and to provide recommendations. Some recommendations from the European Commission have successfully supported the implementation. In the Finnish context the large-scale project "Developing Lingustically Responsive and Culturally Sustaining Teaching and Teacher Education in Finland" (DivEd) carried out in partnership with numerous universities has been the main trigger to promote changes in the areas of language awareness and cultural responsiveness in teacher education.

II. **The challenge of limited competence in the areas of language awareness and cultural responsiveness in teacher education can be tackled with partnerships between (a) the universities in Lithuania, Estonia and possibly Finland; (b) between university teacher training units within the country; and (c) involvement of internal or external experts**

Who has the required competence for guiding the development process? How to motivate teacher educators?

Both Estonia and Lithuania are rather small countries in terms of population which makes it challenging to find top experts and competence in every field. Thus, there is a limited capacity of expert knowledge in the areas of language awareness and cultural responsiveness in teacher education as was pointed out by the representative from the University of Tartu as a challenge hindering the development of initial and in-service teacher education in terms of LRCS. Immediately academics from both Estonian and Lithuanian universities suggested cooperation and competence sharing/building between the teacher trainers and curriculum developers to tackle this challenge. It was inquired whether external experts were involved while developing the teacher's preparation programme in Finland. Jenni Alisaari explained that a network was created between Turku and Tampere universities and several external exports including Jim Cummins have taken part in the programme development process.

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The question of competence raised a question of an existing research and mapping of status quo in the two countries. In Estonia, a group of researchers is working on migration: an overview of existing research on multilingual education is in progress. However, during the discussions it emerged that experts and researchers are working in a fragmented way on this topic. For instance, there are some studies on bilingual education and on returnees etc, but there is not a wholistic point/place of reference where teacher trainers or teacher students, practicing pedagogues or other interested parties would be able to gain an up-to-date and evidence-based overview both in terms of research, including policy analysis and overview.

Another point raised during the round table discussion was related to the preparation and motivation of teacher educators as crucial actors in the partnership. Finnish experiences emphasized teacher educator´s key role in development of innovative curriculum, pedagogical practices and building the foundation for reflectivity, openness and innovation in ITE. Teacher educators can provide student teachers with targeted knowledge and curricular resources, in creating critical reflective discussions on diversity and equity in education, in proposing diverse school placements, and in preparing them to communicate and interact with pupils' families[18]. Yet, participants agreed that currently, teacher educators are not prepared in terms of LRCS as standard qualification requirements for teacher educators rarely pass this in initial training. It is crucial therefore to plan some capacity building activities for teacher educator and engagement of international teacher educators to support and guide in the process of preparation/revision of teacher training modules.

III.   **In order to ensure quality and comprehensive approach, best practices need to accompany understanding of theoretical background of language awareness and cultural responsiveness**
       What is possible to include in teacher training programmes?

While acknowledging the common understanding that teachers often seek best practices and practical advice, some participants were rather critical about putting the main emphasis on best practices. They also emphasized the value of theoretical framework which helps to understand various conceptions and enables teachers to make appropriate choices in practice. Thus, there is a need to look at the external experience and build an academic discipline of linguistically sensitive and culturally sustainable pedagogy intertwined with practical examples. Researchers stressed the need to address the topic of benefits for native students in diverse classroom in a more systematic way both theoretically and with practical examples.

Mentors in existing schools need to be able to integrate and cover the issues of practical elements and include the information in the programme. One instrument that could initiate systemic change: a quality assurance system that could include requirements of LRCS pedagogy. Effective quality assurance strengthens the capacity of ITE to prepare student teachers in LRCS pedagogy. However, most quality assurance mechanisms do not take diversity-related aspects into account when evaluating ITE programmes and curricula. Furthermore, existing quality assurance systems are rarely linked to the competences and learning outcomes to be acquired by student teachers. In evaluating, accrediting, and providing recommendations for ITE systems, quality assurance can constitute a key tool to better promote the inclusion of diversity from the policy to the provider level. Lithuanian and Estonian educational institutions could attain expertise from quality assurance policies and guidelines in other countries. For instance, in Austria, in 2013, the Quality Assurance Council (QSR) for teacher education was created to support the preparation of a handbook for curriculum development. It provides guidelines to ITE institutions for developing their own curricula. The QSR described four competences as necessary goals for teacher education: 1) general pedagogical competence; 2) subject and didactical competence; 3) diversity and gender competence; and 4) social competence.

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[18] European Commission (2017), Preparing teachers for diversity: the role of initial teacher education. PPMI.

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IV. **There should be a continuity in teacher education, covering both ITE and in-service training**
What is more efficient: ITE or CPD?

Even though the major focus of the discussion was initial teach education, the workshop also emphasized the importance of continuity of teacher education, adequacy and quality of in-service teacher training and encouragement of in-service teachers to take part in the training systematically. Participants raised concern regarding the teacher's motivation to take part in the LRCS-related in-service professional development courses. It was agreed that, firstly, funding should be allocated to motivate in-service teachers to gain additional qualifications and enhance their skills. However, it would be crucial to decide who can ensure the quality of in-service teacher education. Another issue raised is the sustainability of in-service teacher qualification (in terms of professional development quality). Participants noted that in Lithuania every institution can receive accreditation and provide in-service training, which results in disperse and fragmented offer. Thus, it is hard to ensure the sustainability and the quality of professional development courses. It was suggested to limit the types of training providers, e.g., to Education academies in universities (as it is done in Estonia or Finland). This would ensure higher quality of the offered courses and motivation of teachers to take part in their competency's development. Also, digital online courses could be offered as an alternative. For instance, online tool in Spain (*Una Guía para aplicar la educación intercultural en la escuela)* enables in-service and pre-service teachers to review their own beliefs about diversity and helps them put into practice resources for LRCS pedagogy.

4. Conclusions and way forward

I.   Lithuanian National Agency for Education is currently developing an integration model where they will highlight the importance of linguistically sensitive and culturally responsive teaching and include a section with useful materials and tools.

II.   Lithuanian Ministry of Education will use the resources from the 2019 Baltic workshop in the finalisation of teacher competence' standards more explicitly highlight multicultural competence and language awareness of teachers.

III.   In the context of positive net migration rates and dispersion of migrants throughout the country, the Ministry of Education and Research in Estonia suggest two possible solutions to address diversity:

   a.)   Establishing regional competence centres that consult and support school professionals. Such as centre will serve as a place of reference where teacher trainers or teacher students, pedagogues, parents or other interested parties would be able to gain an up-to-date and evidence-based overview of research, policy analysis and best practices.

   b.)   Ensuring that every teacher receives training on sufficient linguistically responsive and culturally sustainable strategies and pedagogical competence (incl. migrants and returnees) through initial and/or in-service training.

   In Lithuania, policy-makers indicated that they will continue to upgrade and expand the network of regional schools that integrate returnees and possibly include newly arrived immigrant students. The aim of the network is to strengthen the preparedness of regional schools to include returnees by sharing good practice examples and pedagogical tools.

IV.   The challenge of limited competence in the areas of language awareness and cultural responsiveness in teacher education can be tackled with partnerships between

   a.)   the universities in Lithuania, Estonia and possibly Finland;

   b.)   between university teacher training units within the country;

   c.)   involvement of internal or external experts.

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V.   Annex - Agenda

Venue: Conference room 222, Education academy, Vytauto Didziojo university
Address: T. Ševčenkos g. 31, Vilnius, Lithuania
Arrival of the participants

10.00-10.30   Meet, greet and coffee

10.30 – 10.40   Welcoming words and overview of the Baltic inter-ministerial partnership on migrant education policy *by Eve Mägi and Hanna Siarova*

10.40 – 11.30   **Session 1. The status quo in teacher training for diversity in the Baltics** (lead by *Hanna Siarova and Eve Mägi*):

- Overview of the status quo of language awareness and multicultural competence development in teacher training in Estonia and Lithuania (Eve and Hanna)
- Context of initial teacher training and on-going reforms and plans and the roles of national authorities in this process (participants from universities and Ministry of Education)

11.30– 12.15   **Session 2. A growing diversity in the society and the need for multicultural competence in teacher training**: what and how has Finland achieved? Initial teacher training in Finland and experiences of Turku University in integrating topics of diversity into teacher training curricula by *Jenni Alisaari*

12.15 – 13.15   Lunch

13.15 – 14.45   **Session 3. Discussion with the participants 'Reconsidering teacher education programmes'** (lead by *Jenni Alisaari*)

What can we take from Finnish experience and experiences of Turku University in integrating topics of diversity into teacher training curricula in a more systematic way considering the current pattern and developments in teacher training in the Baltics? Who? What? And How?

14.45 – 15.00   Coffee and tea break

15.00 – 16.00   **Session 4. Follow-up discussion and concrete next steps** on how to design teacher training module in a way that multicultural competence and language awareness is present in a more systematic way (lead by *Eve Mägi and Hanna Siarova*)

Departure of the participants

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