



Summary of the Results of the CEEC Survey on the Autonomy of Catholic Education in Europe – March 2017

Preliminary remark: 23 countries have answered the survey launched by the CEEC¹. However, not all of them have provided the same clarifications in the development of responses. This should be taken into account.

Four questions to study:

1. *What is the general autonomy of Catholic Education in Europe? What can it decide by itself?*
2. *What funding is granted to Catholic Education in Europe?*
3. *What is the place of Religious Education in Europe?*
4. *Are there conflicts, areas of tension, concerning Catholic Education in Europe?*

General Autonomy of Catholic Education in Europe

Among the 23 countries that have answered the CEEC survey, 6 highlight that Catholic education in their country is **particularly autonomous**. These are Germany, Belgium-Flanders, France, Ireland, Romania and Slovenia.

Clearly, the greatest freedom given to Catholic education is in the recruitment of teachers. Indeed, in Germany, Austria, Croatia, French- and German-speaking Belgium, Belgium-Flanders, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Romania, Slovenia and Ukraine, Catholic schools are free to appoint their teaching personnel.

Furthermore, there is also freedom in the establishment of programmes in French- and German-speaking Belgium, Belgium-Flanders, Germany and the Netherlands.

On the contrary, in many countries that have answered the survey, Catholic education must comply with the official programmes. This is the case in Austria, Croatia², Spain, France, Greece, Ireland³, Italy⁴, Lithuania⁵, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Romania⁶ and Ukraine.

¹ Albania, Germany, Austria, French- and German-speaking Belgium, Belgium (Flanders), Croatia, Scotland, Spain, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Poland, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and Ukraine.

² Although there may be arrangements regarding what is not consistent with the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

³ Except for what concerns the Catholic Church's programme of religious education, which Catholic schools are free to use.

⁴ Except for what concerns the class of religion that is a cultural education in religious matters. This programme is defined by the ecclesiastical authorities.

⁵ Even though private Catholic schools may define their own programme for some subjects.

⁶ Even though there may be some additional subjects that ensure the specificity of the Catholic school.

Funding of Catholic Education in Europe

We observe **three different situations**:

- Countries where Catholic education is *not at all funded*: Albania (indirect subsidy), Greece, Italy (minimal), Ukraine.
- Countries where Catholic education is *partially funded*:⁷ Germany, Austria, French- and German-speaking Belgium, Croatia, Spain, France, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Czech Republic, Portugal, Poland and Slovenia.
- Countries where Catholic education is *totally funded*: Belgium-Flanders, Scotland, Netherlands and Sweden.

Place of Religious Education

Here too, **three situations are described** by the answering countries:⁸

- Religious education is a *compulsory part of the programme* of Catholic education: Germany, Austria, French- and German-speaking Belgium, Belgium-Flanders, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Ukraine.
- Religious education is an *optional part of the programme* of Catholic education: Scotland, Spain (but often chosen by pupils), Italy (chosen by about 100% pupils), Netherlands and Romania.
- Religious education is forbidden during school time:⁹ France, Sweden.

Conflicts, Areas of Tension

Essentially **two different answers** have been given by several countries:

- There is currently *no conflict*: Albania, Austria, Belgium-Flanders, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania and Romania.
- Tensions are linked to *funding*: Germany, French- and German-speaking Belgium, France, Italy, Norway, Czech Republic, Slovenia (waiting for a new law to be voted by the Parliament), Sweden and Ukraine.

Nevertheless, several countries have mentioned other ongoing conflicts or other areas of tension requiring particular vigilance on their part. So we mention, without any order of importance: attacks on autonomy in the management, recruitment or pedagogical organisation (FR and BE-fr & ger); a shortage of teachers (UK-Scot and SE); the lack of stability of teachers because salaries are more attractive in public education (IT); debates on themes that are not in accordance with the Catholic faith (IT, SE); overly strict State requirements for obtaining curriculum approval (NO); refusal to recognise some formations in private schools (SI); teaching of religion in schools (BE-fr & ger, ES); prohibition of giving priority to Catholic pupils at the time of registration (SE).

⁷ For this point, we must be careful because each country has not given enough details. For some, the salaries are paid by the State; for some others, there is a partial payment of the cost per pupil; and for still others, there may be a participation in the maintenance costs...

⁸ In Albania, there is no religious education class even though the law can permit it. But the school has to send a written request with a detailed study plan in order to obtain special permission from the Council of Ministers (only two schools provide a class of religious culture but no religious education as such).

⁹ Catechesis can be taught outside school time.

Summary of the content of the responses to the survey¹⁰

(AL) Albania: Catholic schools do not receive subsidies directly from the State but through a fund granted by the State to all Religious Communities in Albania. Although this fund does not cover even 5% of the Catholic schools' expenses, the Catholic community has decided to distribute this fund mostly for Catholic schools.

Schools depend on the Ministry of Education and Sport for the curriculum based on the national framework of curriculum.

Catholic schools have the possibility to select their staffs and continuous training on the basis of criteria decided by the Ministry of Education.

The law has let open the possibility for schools to have religion classes but a written request with a detailed study plan must be sent to an ad hoc office near the Prime Ministry of Albania to obtain a special permission from the Council of Ministers (only two high schools have this permission. They provide a class of religious culture, but no religious education as such).

There is no conflict.

(AT) Austria: Catholic education receives the same subsidy as public education for teachers. Salaries are paid by the State (for 40 years). Other expenses (running costs and non-teaching personnel) are the responsibility of the school governing bodies.

Catholic schools ask for having "public rights", which means being recognised by the State. This is necessary for being State-granted but also for pupils not to have to present external exams. However, this also means no longer being autonomous regarding the curricula and school programmes.

In Catholic education as in public education, there is a class of religion (each pupil can attend a class of his/her own religion if it is recognised by the State). The difference with State schools is that in these, pupils can ask not to attend religion classes.

Catholic schools can freely appoint their teachers

There is no particular conflict between Catholic education and the State, only common reflections about the future of education.

(BE-fr & gr) French- and German-speaking Belgium: The legal framework provides distinct school subsidising according to the education network. So Catholic education receives, per pupil, a subsidy well below what the school from the network organised by the Community would receive for this same pupil. The difference varies, according to levels, between 25 and 40% in compulsory education. This system was originally justified by objective differences that have disappeared in the course of the political will of standardisation of all schools.

Until last year, all pupils in primary and secondary levels had in their programme two hours per week religious education. But two years ago, the government decided to create a new compulsory class on Education in Philosophy and Citizenship (EPC) for all State schools, at a rate of one hour per week. In these schools, the pupils of primary education also had two hours religious education (one of the 5 religions recognised in Belgium) or ethics. Since September 2016, the lessons of religion and ethics have been reduced to one hour per week; the second hour becoming obligatory a class of EPC. Catholic education has not accepted to replace one hour religious education by one hour citizenship because it consider that there is no actual separation between religion and citizenship. However, this citizenship competence must be taught in Catholic schools, too. So Catholic education has decided to do it in a transversal way through several subjects.

¹⁰ Countries are arranged in alphabetical order of the ISO codes to keep the same order in the various linguistic versions of the document.

If the Constitution has given some guarantees to Catholic education in Belgium, it is however necessary to remain attentive to the legislative developments that often try to dent the principles of freedom and equality of education.

The very recent debate on the place of the class of Catholic religion in the compulsory hours of pupils shows how much we have to remain attentive to the respect of our specificities.

We also can note that there is a great temptation, especially in the trade unions in the name of equality between all staff members, to erase the specific legal regime of Catholic education in favour of a strictly statutory mechanism close to civil service. In this, there would be violation of the freedom of education that, according to the Constitutional Court, includes especially the right to recruit personnel who meets and agrees with the educational project of the organising authority.

(BE-nl) Belgium-Flanders: Catholic education enjoys almost the same basic financing as education organised by the State. There are two main differences: (1) Flemish-Community education gets 3% more budget to guarantee the free choice for neutral education; (2) official schools (i.e. Flemish-Community education) and the schools organised by cities, municipalities and province get 4,5% more budget to offer a choice in philosophy-of-life education.

Catholic education is quite autonomous: it may draw up its own curriculum, taking into account the final objectives and the developmental objectives, defined by Flemish Parliament. The development and organisation of the school programmes is the responsibility of the school board and the school team.

Teachers are appointed by the school board.

Pupils in compulsory education are entitled to two periods of religion per week as part of the basis curriculum. In official education (Flemish Community Education) and other subsidised official education (organised by cities, municipalities and provinces) pupils have a choice between non-confessional ethics and religion (which could be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islamic, Anglican, or Orthodox), while in subsidised private education (mainly Catholic education, but also other private education) there is no choice. Pupils attending Catholic schools have two (or sometimes in primary education three) periods of Catholic religion per week.

The Belgian Constitution guarantees the freedom of religion and the freedom of education.

There is no difference between the status of teachers in Catholic education and in official education (nor between the teacher of religion and the other teachers). The salaries and pensions are paid by the State.

Parents have the freedom of school choice. They sign the declaration to be loyal to the denominational project of the school.

(CZ) Czech Republic: Catholic schools enjoy same financing as education organised by the State without investment and about 10 % less on salary.

The State issues the framework educational programmes for the different types of schools and subjects. These are basic and relatively flexible. So schools can establish their own educational programmes that reflect important accents of the school – Christian ethics, personal and spiritual development, etc.

The teachers are selected by the headmaster, provided that they have the required qualifications, under the *Education Act* (teachers of religion need a license from the bishop).

A religious education class has been restored since the end of Communism. Pupils are asked to agree with the educational project of the school, parents are not.

The diplomas and certificates issued by Catholic education have the same legal value as those issued by State education.

No actual conflict but a never ending story: the financing of Church schools by the State.

(DE) Germany: private schools (among which Catholic schools) receive from the State only 60 to 90% of the real costs, according to the *Land* and type of school.

Generally, all education in Germany is under State supervision. However, article 7, § 4 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Grundgesetz*) guarantees “the right to establish private schools”. These are officially recognised as “alternatives to State schools”, fulfilling the same functions as State schools. They are equivalent but not equal to State schools: they deliver the same diplomas and certificates but they have quite an important freedom regarding the organisation of school life, recruitment of teachers and school programmes. Catholic schools represent the major part of these private schools.

In most *Länder*, religious education is a regular subject, which is submitted to State inspection. However, the Church or religious community is responsible for the objectives and content, defined according to the educational mission of the school.

As “alternative schools”, private schools have the right to make autonomous decisions regarding the measures for ensuring quality education in their schools. In 2009, the German Bishops’ Conference published “quality criteria for Catholic schools” to give them orientations.

Catholic schools are free to appoint their teaching staff provided that their training corresponds to that of teachers in State schools.

Parents have to agree with the educational project of the school.

Generally, the autonomy of private schools is not questioned. There can be singular conflicts in some *Länder* concerning their concrete organisation and especially the level of their funding by the State.

(ES) Spain: Catholic education, as any other private school, can benefit from economic support, by means of an agreement with the State. This financial support should be equal to what the State schools receive, but in practice it is less important (twice as much for a pupil in a State school).

The school under contract is autonomous but not as much as it would like to be. There is relative freedom regarding the recruitment of teachers, less about the establishment of programmes, and nothing concerning the admission of pupils.

There has always been religious education classes. The law includes it in the curriculum of all schools. The class of religion is proposed by the school and left to the free choice of pupils or their parents. In Catholic education, parents naturally give their agreement as a result of their acceptance of the educational project. Teachers of religion are appointed by the school but must have an accreditation from the Church. However, the inspection is done by the State.

The teaching of religion in schools is questioned by a section of the population. A part of the population also questions the contracts between the State and private schools.

Education remains a debated issue. So far, the realisation of an “educational pact” developing the agreement included in the Constitution has not been possible.

(FR) France: a great majority of the Catholic schools in France have signed a contract of association with the State since 1959. A very small minority works without any public funding, although the State exercises a minimum academic control over them. They are called “non-contracted”. Only the situation of schools under contract is described below.

According to the law, the funding of Catholic education must be the same as that of public education. Since the financing comes from the State and Collectivities (municipalities, departments, regions), the law requires them to calculate the cost of a pupil in public education and to fund, on this basis, the Catholic schools according to their number of pupils. If the calculation is not correct, the funding of Catholic schools will not be equivalent.

Given that the State and Collectivities do not own the premises of Catholic schools, they do not finance the repairs of buildings or even the construction. Catholic education can therefore count only on its own resources, namely the contribution of families. Anyway, an 1880 law allows to solicit the support of Collectivities for investments and repairs (not more than 10% of the annual operating budget).

The autonomy of Catholic education is quite important. It only must comply with the programmes and the yearly number of school days.

There is no religious education in the curriculum but optional sessions of catechesis or moral reflection can be organised outside of school time. Teachers of catechesis are often volunteers. At the moment of the registration of the pupil, the educational project is presented to the parents and pupil, who have to agree with it.

There are currently several conflicts:

- Teachers being a personnel of public law, their appointment must be accepted by both the State and the headteacher. This question is often source of conflict because it concerns the autonomy of recruitment.
- Issues regarding timetable or distribution of services which call into question the autonomy of the headteacher in his/her pedagogical organisation.
- Disputes concerning the movement of employment (agreement or refusal of the headteacher for the employment of a teacher) which jeopardise the autonomy of recruitment.
- Another source of conflict concerns the funding, which then jeopardise the working of the school.

(GR) Greece: Catholic education does not enjoy the same financing and investments as public education.

Catholic education is independent from the rest educational institutions, privately funded, and presents a significant number of differences especially in its organisation and structure.

Catholic schools are better equipped than State schools.

Catholic schools must follow the curriculum as it is designed and imposed by the Ministry of Education, including for the religious education class which is part of the curriculum.

The teachers are appointed by the school according to its principles.

Pupils graduating from Catholic schools are evaluated on the same basis as other pupils graduating from the rest educational institutions.

The diplomas and certificates issued by Catholic schools have the same legal value as the ones issued by State institutions.

(HR) Croatia: Catholic schools are funded at two levels: at the levels of the government and the one of local authorities. At the national level, Catholic schools are funded as well as State schools, which applies to the salaries of teachers and other school staff. At the local level, there is inequality because local authorities have the right to decide the extent to which they fund Catholic schools.

Catholic schools are obliged to follow the curriculum prescribed by the relevant Ministry, but with agreements concerning what is not in accordance with the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

Religious education is an obligatory class in Catholic schools.

Classes of religion in all schools in Croatia, State schools and Catholic schools, are determined by agreements between the Republic of Croatia and the Vatican State.

Teachers of religion are controlled by the National Catechetical Office of the Croatian Bishops' Conference at the national level and each Catechist office in the diocese. Office distributes religion teachers in schools.

Catholic schools are free to recruit their staff.

Parents have to agree verbally with the school educational project but a contract to be signed by parents is currently in the process of being made.

(HU) Hungary: Catholic education enjoys the same funding as education organised by the State thanks to an agreement signed in 1997 between the Holy See and the Hungarian Government.

There is a national curriculum that is used as basis for the framework programmes of the different subjects. All schools, including Catholic schools, prepare their own curriculum on this same basis. So autonomy, which is not that important, exists at the level of the schools. The school curriculum must be approved by the school governing body (for Catholic schools that is to say the representative of the diocese or the congregation).

As far as the appointment of teachers is concerned, in Catholic schools the headteacher has the freedom and responsibility to recruit his/her staff.

There are two hours per week religious education for all pupils.

The Churches have the right to organise religion classes, even in State schools, and these religious education classes are covered by State funding.

Teachers of religion in Catholic schools are appointed by the headteacher as all other teachers. However, teachers of Calvinist and Lutheran religions are appointed, like all teachers of religion in State schools, by the leaders of the Order.

There is a national inspection system for the supervision of the quality of primary and secondary education. However, the president of the committee inspecting the work of Catholic teachers must be a representative of Catholic education.

The diplomas and certificates delivered by Catholic education have the same legal value as those of State education.

There is currently no conflict.

(IE) Ireland: Although the State provides funding for Catholic schools (including payment for teacher salaries) the amount given by the State is less than that given to State schools or to schools that are in a direct partnership with the state (Community schools).

Catholic schools have a great deal of autonomy.

Although there is a State curriculum for all schools – which includes a State Religious Education curriculum which is examined in State examinations at second level.

Catholic schools are free to use the Catholic Church's own Religious Education programmes at primary and secondary levels. Schools are not obliged to follow the State RE curriculum at second level.

Catholic schools are voluntary schools set up by the Church or the Religious Congregations – they are not State schools.

Teachers of RE are appointed by Board of Management of School. They must be qualified from third level institutions acceptable to Church.

If Religion is taken as a State exam subject, the school inspectors from the State can examine that. However, if RE is seen as formation then that is controlled by the Trustees through the Board of Management of each school.

Teachers are freely selected by the schools.

(IT) Italy: Catholic schools are part of equivalent non-State schools, which are regulated by the law 62/2000 on the "Equivalence System" (*parità scolastica*). This provides just a small contribution to the equivalent schools: less than 500.000 € for nearly 14.000 schools (among which 2/3 are Catholic schools). The State contribution is divided in unequal way among the schools: the most part goes to the nursery schools and hardly nothing to the secondary schools. So the cost of management is predominantly charged to the families.

Catholic schools are not autonomous because they are equivalent schools. So they must respect the rules of State school about school curriculum and teacher qualification.

The Concordat – signed in 1929 and revised in 1984 – between Italy and the Holy See provides religious education in every school (State schools and equivalent schools). The religious education class is optional, but is chosen in State schools by 88% of pupils and in Catholic schools by nearly 100%. Religious education must be given *“in the context of the school’s aims”*. So it cannot be catechism but cultural education in religious matter. According to the Concordat, the programmes of religious education are defined by the Church authority, the school books are approved by the Bishop Conference and the teachers are chosen by the bishop. The bishop could control the teaching of religion but it seldom happens. The teacher of religion must have an academic licence in theology or religious sciences and this title is sufficient to certify the quality of the teaching.

According to the Equivalency System, the diplomas issued by Catholic schools have the same legal value as the diplomas of State schools.

Catholic schools can freely choose their teachers among those who are been qualified by the State. The parents must agree with this school educational project, but also non-Catholic parents choose Catholic schools for their children.

The main problem is the economic one. Many catholic schools are going to end their activities.

Some catholic schools don’t respect the Concordat about religious education and do not inform the bishop about the teachers who are charged of religious education.

The main problem is the economic one. Many Catholic schools are going to end their activities. The teachers are not always permanent because they are attracted by the State schools, where the salary is higher.

The school system in general becomes more and more secularised. For instance, there is currently a debate about the introduction of the gender theory into the schools.

(LT) Lithuania: Catholic schools have various kinds of legal status (State schools with Catholic educational direction or private Catholic schools). To organise education process they get the same financial support from the State. The Republic of Lithuania and the Holy See have signed an agreement concerning the cooperation in the fields of education and culture. This concordat ensures implementation of equal legal possibilities in the education area.

The autonomy of a Catholic school depends on its legal status. If the founder is a municipality, the direction of Catholic education is defined by the regulations of the school. All Catholic schools base their work on the General Education Curriculum which is approved by the State. Private Catholic schools substantiate their uniqueness with the concept of Catholic education system. Private schools sometimes create their own programmes for some of the subjects.

These schools choose educators on a selective basis: not only professional competence is assessed, but personal qualities and the maturity of a candidate’s faith are very important as well. The leaders of the school is responsible for school pastoral care.

State schools provide possibility for pupils to choose between ethics or denominational religious education. In Catholic schools, Catholic religious education is a compulsory subject. Catholic schools prepare individual programmes of religious education or enlarged common programmes of religious education according to education directions of a particular religious congregation bearing in mind political, cultural and social context of society. Common programmes of religious education are approved by the decision of Lithuanian Bishops’ Conference and the Council of Education of Ministry of Education and Science.

The current political context in Lithuania is favourable to denominational education.

According to the Law of Education, all teachers have the same rights, including teachers of religion, and their salary is paid by the State.

Religious teachers who seek to work at school must get the canonical permission from the Church (*Missio Canonica*).

As all Catholic schools have common educational programmes with other schools, the diploma at the end of Catholic high school is accepted by the State.

(NL) Netherlands: all education enjoys the same financing, whether organised by the State or by private foundations and associations. The entire education sector falls under the same law and public system.

There is freedom of education in all the areas mentioned. However, the education inspectorate (a government body) controls the quality of education. The inspection has the authority to take corrective measures.

Schools offer lessons in religion or worldview on a voluntary basis.

Schools are free to appoint their staff members provided that they have the required qualifications.

Teachers of religion are recognised by the diocese.

The Constitution of the Netherlands provides for freedom of education according to what the schools can ask families to agree with the Christian educational project.

At the moment, there is no particular conflict except for the fact that the State interferes too much in the content and structure of education through the intermediary of inspection.

The diplomas of Catholic education have the same legal value as those of State education.

(NO) Norway: Historical Catholic schools received no government grants. Since 1970, there has been a State grant under the "*Private Education Act*", now "*The Independent Schools Act*". Catholic schools receive an amount per pupil (head tax) corresponding to 85% of the running costs in a similar State school. Until recently, schools did not receive any subsidies for the buildings, rentals or investments. The last few years some very small grants (symbolic grants) have been given for such expenditures. In Norway, about 30% of the total school expenditures are linked to buildings and investments. The government funds Catholic schools to approximately 65% of the total costs in governmental schools. Catholic schools require tuition fees corresponding to 15% of current expenditures in State schools.

The School Board elects who will be hired, but all teachers must have an education that meets the requirements of The Education Act. Teachers working in independent schools with public grants are entitled to similar wages and working conditions as teachers in public education.

All schools in Norway must work in accordance with approved curricula. The requirements of the government are so strict that it is extremely difficult to get approved alternative plans to public schools. However, the authorities require the curricula of Catholic schools to show a difference with those of State schools. A religious school should have a character that is reflected in the curriculum. The programmes of Catholic schools are recognised by both the Church and the government.

All Catholic schools in Norway have religious education classes in all grades, two or three lessons a week, while State schools have two hours "neutral" religious instruction per week. Catholic schools may require that their pupils participate in religious education provided that this education is in link with the approved curriculum. Denominational schools may give priority to children from their own religious community. However, a school that has available places for pupils cannot refuse any applicant.

There is no conflict of significance. However, Catholic schools in Norway claim that the government grants are too small to ensure the universal right of parents to choose the education for their children as they wish. Catholic schools also claim that public requirements for the approval of an optional curriculum are too strict.

(PL) Poland: there are public and non-public schools, with public rights. The so called State schools are public schools, run by local authorities. Catholic education is provided in the form of both public and non-public schools. Public schools run by local authorities or other legal entities (including Catholic schools and non-public Catholic ones), are financed from State budgetary resources. Community public schools are fully financed in this way, too. The subsidy received by public non-community schools depends on the number of pupils. The subsidy rate is decided by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance. The rate is established on the basis of the cost of education of a pupil in a public community school of the same type. Non-public schools receive subsidy and charge tuition. The amount of subsidy for public and non-public schools (including Catholic schools) run by other entities than local authorities depends on the State overall spending for education. If the spending is bigger, the subsidy is bigger. This issue is regulated by the law on educational system. Catholic schools have the obligation to follow the National Curriculum which must be included in all school programmes. However, Catholic schools are not obliged to teach ideas that are not in accordance with Christian culture.

The Polish Catholic schools are free to select their teachers and to appoint them on different terms than in public community schools.

Religious education is taught in public and non-public Catholic schools. A school is obliged to offer such classes. Even if the left-wing political parties do not oppose religious education; they oppose the fact that religious education teachers are financed from the State budgetary resources. So far, they have opposed it in vain.

There is currently no conflict between the State and Catholic education.

(PT) Portugal: no private school has equal funding to State schools. Some private schools (among which 30 Catholic schools) have a “contract of association” that guarantees free of charge education for pupils. The other Catholic schools (which make the great majority) can have a “simple contract” that allows to cover the costs for low-income families.

There is an important pedagogical and administrative autonomy in the statutes, but in practice, it is limited. There is a minimum national programme (with some flexibility).

The schools are free to appoint their teachers provided that they have the academic and professional qualifications required by the Ministry of Education.

Regarding teachers of religion, for both Catholic and State schools, the Church must recognised their honourability. The Church controls the content of religious education programmes. There have always been religious education classes in Portuguese schools.

A school may ask families to agree with its educational project, but schools in association must accept the children even if parents do not agree with this project.

The latest measures taken by the left-wing government in Portugal place private education (of which Catholic school is part) in a difficult situation:

- Law modifying the standards of recruitment of pupils: each school has been allocated a certain geographic area and cannot recruit pupils outside this limit. For some schools, this has led to the cancellation of several classes at various levels and, consequently, to an important decrease in the funding, since it is determined according to the number of pupils.
- Breaking by the government of the association contract signed with some private schools: initially planned for a period of three years, this contract has been revoked by the government who replaces it by a yearly contract. The former contract allowed organising more classes than the new one, which thus also limit the number of pupils per school.

Other problems: those who cannot afford the private school have a limited choice of schools; pedagogical autonomy is almost non-existent and there is also a problem of didactic material (usable handbooks, mandatory analysis of texts difficulty in accordance with the values of the Gospel).

(RO) Romania: in general, the funding is the same for private education and for education organised by the State; but not all Catholic schools do enjoy equal treatment to State schools.

The Education Law stipulates that the funding is guaranteed for all pupils and that the amount allocated follows the pupil in the school where he/she learns.

Catholic education enjoys good autonomy. Catholic schools must align with the curriculum established by the Ministry of Education, but they may add some subjects that ensure their specificity. Their autonomy consists of the fact that they have their own management and select competent teachers for the various school subjects.

There is religious education in the curriculum of all schools. This has been the case only since 1990, after the fall of Communism. Before that, it was forbidden. The presence of religion in schools has passed through several stages: the compulsory nature of this subject after the fall of Communism, then the attempt to make it optional after some time, and finally the recent proposal of the Parliament that the children themselves express their choice in this respect, but while leaving the final decision to parents.

Catholic education can freely appoint staff members for its schools, but this is a delicate matter because it is sometimes needed to resort to personnel coming from the Orthodox environment. Appointment criteria can be defined but only on the basis of the training and competences, not on religious convictions.

The schools ask parents to agree with the educational project and sign a contract of cooperation. There is no particular conflict.

(SE) Sweden: all non-State schools have by law the same financing as the State ones. However, the local councils retain some of the funding for their administration.

Catholic schools are not allowed to give any religious instruction during the school day. Nor are they allowed to give preference to Catholic families who want a place for their child. Catholic education applied to get recognition for a course on Catholic faith (as knowledge rather than catechesis) and it was turned down. Lessons about Catholicism must fit into the normal school curriculum about religions.

Finding qualified Catholic teachers is one of the hardest things in Sweden. Catholic schools would not be allowed to employ an unqualified Catholic if a qualified non-Catholic applied for the same job.

Religious education is organised after school or in the parishes. These rules have become stricter in the last four years. If Catholic schools were shown to have given religious instruction in the school they could lose their right to run a school and lose all State funding.

Those who teach religion are teachers who are qualified in social sciences. Some teachers who are catechists in their home parish instruct the children after school on a voluntary basis.

The State inspects the independent schools twice as much as the State schools. The content of the social studies programme is scrutinised and the children are asked questions.

Several conflicts between Catholic schools and local councils concern the amount of the subsidy that the Councils must pay to Catholic schools, in comparison with subsidy given to State schools. Another conflict also concerns the fact that Catholic schools are not allowed to give priority to Catholic families. There is also a problem linked with the content of the programmes. Indeed, some subjects are "anti-Catholic". Some contents concern birth control, homosexuality... The schools get around them by adding the Catholic point of view on these matters.

(SI) Slovenia: public schools are all founded and financed by the State and everything not founded by the State is private (even though the programmes are accredited and recognised by the State). Primary school (6 to 14 years) is mandatory for all children. It is free and financed by the State. Since 2015, private schools also enjoy this right. There was a dispute at the Constitutional Court regarding the cancellation of the right to free primary school and the right to choose a specific education – both guaranteed by the Constitution. The decision of the Constitutional Court has not been implemented yet into legislation. Even after this, the 100% financing will only apply to the costs of programme (equalling the sum of a State school programme). Secondary school (15 to 18 years) is not compulsory. The State finances all State approved programmes in primary and secondary education founded after 1996 by private founders (such as Churches or religious orders, or any other) to the extent of 85% for the programme. Maintenance is always at the expense of the founder. The State does not fund any subjects that are not in the national curriculum and does not provide any means for the maintenance of educational institutions of which it is not the founder. There is a rather large autonomy in the school system. Catholic schools are entirely free to decide on the appointment of teachers and management staff, according to their specific needs and preferences. Teachers, however, must have formal State approved education.

Schools are also free to include specific subjects they find necessary to support their programme. The complete inactivity of the State in the curriculum of Religious Education also leaves the Catholic schools autonomy in the preparation of the curriculum. There are prescribed mandatory subjects that all schools (including Catholic ones) must incorporate into their curricula. However, private schools can offer as a part of non-obligatory classes special subjects including religious studies (these classes can be mandatory for these schools if they choose so – and they are obligatory in all the Catholic schools for everyone).

Teachers in Catholic schools are controlled and inspected from the State in the same manner as other teachers in public schools in Slovenia. Every Catholic school also has its own quality measures or evaluation of work.

Pupils have a final exam at the end of secondary education (*Matura*) which is the same as that of State schools. Diplomas have the same value as those of the State.

Catholic schools may ask parents to agree with the educational project. All the schools have a kind of educational contract that the students or their parents (in primary school) have to undersign. They have not to declare themselves Christians but they have to accept the values and the specific educational project of the school.

Catholic education is currently waiting for the law on financing to be presented and passed in the Parliament. The Court has given the Parliament one year to pass this law that will include the 100% financing of the programme of primary schools that is equal to the programme of public schools.

The Ministry of Education has since last year denied the apprenticeship/practice programmes for novice teachers for all private schools. This apprenticeship is mandatory (few exceptions) for all teachers before they can pass the board exam and even though it is in most cases not a paid practice, no one can conduct it in a private school despite the fact that he or she teaches exactly the same curriculum as he or she would in any public school.

(UA) Ukraine: catholic schools are private institutions and do not benefit from any State funding.

Thanks to this private nature, Catholic schools and kindergartens can choose their employees.

However, for the curriculum and programmes, Catholic education is obliged to comply with the basic requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

There has always been religious education in Catholic schools. The schools appoint the teacher of religion. His teaching is controlled by the school administration.

Parents are informed on the educational project of Catholic education, and this is usually the reason why they choose a Catholic school.

For several years, Catholic schools have asked for financial support for Catholic educational institutions from authorities and the State budget.

Until 2014, there have been some obstacles to Church education in Ukraine. Despite the good results of some Catholic schools and despite the success of the Ukrainian Catholic University, the provisions stipulated in the Constitution on the separation between Church and State have been misinterpreted: as a total separation formally forbidding religious organisations to organise formation and education centres. Since 2014, new opportunities have been offered to develop Church education. Firstly, the new Law on Education has introduced very important provisions that allow to recognise Church education, to accept theology as an academic discipline, to recognise the diplomas delivered by the Catholic University.

In 2016, the Ukrainian government made a new step in the reform of education. It mainly concerns secondary education and vocational formation. The government has introduced to the Parliament a new law that provides a strategy for the school reform, which is called “**the new Ukrainian school**”. The main goal of this reform concerns the content of education with the aim to develop an approach based on competences and to obligatory introduce some values.

(UK-Scot) Scotland: Catholic schools in Scotland are funded by Government on the same basis as non-denominational schools. Catholic schools are managed by local government councils which employ teachers, own the school buildings, devolve the management of school funding to Head Teachers. The Church has two legal rights: (1) to approve the “religious belief and character” of all teachers appointed to Catholic schools; (2) to set the content of the curriculum for religious and moral education. There are classes of religion in the Catholic schools and this has always been the case, in accordance with the Education Scotland Act, 1980.

Teachers of religion are appointed by the employer and approved by the Church. The Church controls the content of teaching of religious education.

All schools are open to inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Education. There is no additional inspection of the religious dimension of the Catholic school.

All qualifications are issued by the *Scottish Qualifications Authority* and are common to all schools. Teachers in Catholic schools are appointed by local education authorities and approved by the Church (the local Ordinary).

Parents are advised that a Catholic school has a particular mission and are asked to respect this. In this regard the *Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland* is an important document. Parents have a legal right to withdraw children from religious education and religious observance.

There are frequent attempts made by Secularist groups to challenge what they regard as the privilege given to Catholic education. These are usually founded on Equalities legislation (both UK and European). None has been successful.

For some time Catholic education has been expressing concern to the Scottish Government about a shortage of teachers for Catholic schools. This is a matter of ongoing negotiation.

CEEC, March 2017