

Agnieszka Szplit

Kielce, 2025

ATEE President Speech

Dear members, colleagues, and friends,

Standing here today as your newly elected President is not only an honour—it is deeply moving.

I want to thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for placing your trust in me.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Michiel Heinen, whose leadership, vision, and tireless commitment have strengthened our association in so many ways. Michiel, your dedication, wisdom, and care have guided this association with strength and grace. You have left us a strong foundation—and big shoes to fill. I am grateful for your example and your continued support.

When I reflect on what this association means to me—and to so many of us—I'm reminded of why we chose this profession in the first place. Teaching is never just a job. It's a calling, a commitment, a belief that education has the power to transform lives, and that every child, every learner, deserves a future full of possibility.

This association represents the heart of that belief. It brings together educators, researchers, teacher educators, mentors—people who care deeply about how we prepare the next generation of teachers, and how we ensure that education systems become more just, more inclusive, and more humane.

ATEE holds a unique and vital place in the world of teacher education.

We are not just a professional network—we are a community of educators, researchers, and changemakers, united by a shared belief in the power of education to transform education.

We are operating in a time of rapid change—technological, social, environmental, and political. These changes bring challenges to teacher education, but they also bring opportunities—opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and reconsidering what education can and should be.

As I step into the role of the ATEE president, I do so with a deep sense of responsibility. My vision as President is simple: to lead with openness, with empathy, and with purpose.

One of my key priorities as President will be to ensure that our association remains at the forefront of these developments. This includes supporting high-quality research; strengthening our world-wide collaborations; and deepening our engagement with teachers and practitioners and early-career researchers.

As the new president, I would like to suggest several strategic actions to strengthen our association's position.

I am committed to boosting the visibility and engagement of our association by strengthening our involvement in policy discussions relevant to our field.

By taking a more active role in shaping public discourse and contributing to policy development, we can elevate our association's profile, advocate for our members' interests, and position ourselves as a key voice in the sector.

This engagement will not only enhance our influence but also attract new members and partners who recognize the value of our leadership.

I would like to work closely with the editorial team of our flagship journal to support their outstanding academic leadership.

The *European Journal of Teacher Education* plays a crucial role in shaping the research agenda in our field—not only across Europe but increasingly around the globe. I will support efforts to ensure the journal's continued excellence, its engagement with our publishing partner Taylor & Francis, and its role in responding to the evolving landscape of academic publishing. However, the board also needs to discuss the terms of the current contract with Taylor & Francis and renegotiate certain aspects to explore more favorable options that better align with the associations' goals.

Equally important to me is ensuring that our association remains a welcoming, inclusive, and collaborative space. The one where all voices are heard and valued.

I strongly believe that we are at our best when we are working together, drawing on the richness of diverse perspectives and experiences.

Thus, to better serve our members, I would like to strengthen partnerships with relevant institutions and international and national networks to expand the association's reach and influence.

I think, world-wide contacts are vital for the continued growth and relevance of the association.

While our roots are in Europe, building strong connections beyond the continent allows us to exchange ideas, learn from diverse perspectives, and address global challenges more effectively. Expanding our international presence strengthens our influence, enriches our work, and positions us as a truly global leader in our field.

As the new president, I would also like to expand our membership by reaching out more actively to groups of teachers and practitioners in our field.

These professionals bring valuable on-the-ground experience and perspectives that can greatly enrich our community and complement academic perspectives.

By fostering their involvement and highlighting the benefits of membership, we can build a more diverse and dynamic association.

This broader base will not only strengthen our collective voice but also create new opportunities for collaboration, ultimately enhancing research possibilities through stronger connections between theory and practice.

I am absolutely sure that such actions will help us strengthen ATEE impact and teacher and teacher educators' collaboration, ultimately improving education all over the world.

By embracing new strategies and expanding our reach, the association will be better equipped to support educators and promote innovative practices globally, contributing to higher-quality education everywhere.

In closing, I want to say thank you once again—

Thank you for believing in me.

Thank you for believing in each other.

And thank you, most of all, for the incredible work you do every day to keep the light of education burning bright.

I am confident that together we will continue to grow, to innovate, and to make a meaningful impact on the lives of teachers, learners, and communities across Europe and beyond.

It is a true honour to serve as your President, and I look forward to working with all of you in the months and years ahead.

Thank you.