

Special Education across Europe in 2003

Trends in provision in 18
European countries

**European Agency for Development in Special
Needs Education**



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Preface

This report focuses on the current state of the art of special education policies and practices in 18 European countries, i.e. all the countries of the EU, Switzerland, Iceland and Norway. These countries are members of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education.

In 1996 the European Commission asked the European Agency to describe developments in special education since the situation was described in the EU-report *Report of the Commission on the Progress with regard to the Implementation of the Policy of School Integration in the Member States (1988–1991)*, published in November 1992.

The Agency's update report, published in 1998, is entitled *Integration in Europe: Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs: Trends in 14 European Countries*.

The current report is a second update regarding the situation of special needs education in Europe. The findings in the report refer to the situation up until 2002.

The report is relevant to all organisations and actors involved in (inter)national policy-making, containing information and findings that will be of great interest to all involved in special education and inclusion policies and practices across Europe and elsewhere.

Several individuals and institutions helped in the production of this report. The European Agency would like to express its gratitude to all the National Co-ordinators who have submitted country reports and supplied additional information. Their reports form the basis for the country descriptions included in this publication.



1 Introduction

The goal of this study is to reassess the situation of special education in the Member States compared with the findings as described in the European Agency report of 1998. Before doing so, some comments have to be made. In the first place it has to be pointed out that the countries in the sample used here are not the same as in the sample of 1998: Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg and Switzerland have now been included.

This report mainly focuses on *qualitative trends in inclusion across Europe*. The study is oriented towards trends and developments in the provision for pupils with special needs in the European countries. Though some quantitative data is presented (number of special needs pupils, for example) the emphasis lies on the qualitative side.

Having said this, it should also be stressed that the study is *not focused on describing or evaluating the quality of educational provision*. The method does not allow conclusions on the effects or quality of education. Other procedures and methodologies are more appropriate for assessing the quality of certain educational facilities. In other words, the approach is not expected to present the most valid and reliable data on quality or outcomes. The approach may reveal common problems, developments, trends and central issues across the participating countries. Of course, data is presented concerning the number of pupils included or segregated, but this data never implies values or judgements about the quality of education.

In the next chapter the framework of the study and the methodology used are discussed. In Chapter 3 the country descriptions are presented. In Chapter 4 a general overview is given of the different topics that form the basis of this study. These findings are similar to those presented in a recent report: *Special Needs Education in Europe; Thematic Publication*, published in January 2003, with the contribution of EURYDICE, the Information Network on Education in Europe.



2 Framework and methodology

2.1 Introduction


In this chapter the conceptual framework for the study is described and the procedures and methodology are clarified. In the next sections there is a description of the general approach used in the study (2.2). The content of the study and the issues addressed are then considered (2.3). Finally, in 2.4 some methodological aspects are discussed.

2.2 General approach

The general approach used in this study is more or less the same as that used in the earlier study for the Commission. National co-ordinators submitted thematic country-reports and central analysis and synthesis was undertaken by the Secretariat. During this procedure there was ongoing interaction between staff and actors on the country level in order to obtain and provide additional information or clarification.

European Agency National Co-ordinators have analysed documents, gathered data, consulted experts and so on. In sum: they have co-ordinated the data processing and analysis at the national level.

This procedure thus has the same methodological characteristics and strengths and weaknesses as comparable models frequently used for similar international projects. Its main weakness is that the quality of the data depends heavily on the quality of the material delivered by the countries. The alternative, a more co-ordinated and central data collection method, guarantees more uniform methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. However, such a procedure is probably more costly and time-consuming. On the other hand, the advantage of our approach is that the model used can take the specific context in a country into account and easily prevent misinterpretations.



A relevant restriction is that this study is confined to compulsory school age. This is in line with the earlier study of the Commission and as such attention has not been paid to such themes as pre-primary education, early intervention, transition to the labour market and so on.

2.3 Conceptual framework and questionnaire

The aim is to assess progress in the education of pupils with special needs in Europe. In some countries the concept of special education refers to the segregated education system. In others the term special needs education refers to all forms of special support and teaching within special and mainstream education. Where the term special education is used in this study, it is used in this broader context.

In line with earlier work the following topics are addressed in this study:

- 1 An overview of the state of the art of inclusion, policy, legislation and regulations.
- 2 Definitions of special needs/handicaps, including:
 - different categories;
 - assessment procedures;
 - referral and placement procedures.
- 3 Provision for pupils with special needs, including information concerning:
 - numbers and types of segregated provision (special schools);
 - number and types of mainstream arrangements, such as (part-time or full-time) special classes, resource rooms, visiting/peripatetic teachers.
- 4 Number of pupils with special needs (in compulsory age range)

The first three categories will be presented in the country chapters; the number of pupils will be grouped in a separate chapter covering all the countries.



2.4 Sample and analysis

The sample consists of the countries that participated in the project:

- Austria
- Belgium
 - Flemish Community
 - French Community
- Denmark
- England and Wales
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- The Netherlands
- Norway
- Portugal
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland.

The analysis was fairly straightforward: the country reports were analysed systematically in order to achieve comparable information on the topics as described above.

One of the main interests of this study is to assess the state of the art of the provision for pupils with special needs in Europe. A central topic within this study is to specify the number of pupils across different types of provision. This is a very complex issue, however. Countries use different concepts and different ways of calculating numbers of pupils with special needs. An attempt has been made to make the data uniform wherever possible, by presenting the percentage of pupils with special needs in the different settings. This percentage is calculated by dividing the number of pupils with SEN (Special Educational Needs) by the *total number of pupils in the same age group*.



The comparability is still far from perfect, however: countries use different age groups in this report, as a result of different compulsory age ranges. Ideally, the given numbers and percentages should refer to the same age groups across countries.

In the analysis there is an attempt to estimate how many pupils with special needs are educated in segregated settings. This concept of segregated setting refers in this study to all educational arrangements where pupils are educated in special groups without following the mainstream curriculum alongside their peers without special educational needs.

This implies that in countries where the education of pupils with special needs is arranged through special classes or special groups, the arrangement will be labelled here as a segregated provision if the pupils are educated in such special groups for the largest part of the school day. This, of course, is arbitrary, because in some countries this education is explicitly labelled as taking place in mainstream education. It is, however, internationally accepted to reserve the term inclusion to all those educational settings where pupils with special needs follow the largest part of the curriculum in the mainstream class alongside peers without special educational needs.

In the next chapters, segregated provision thus refers to special schools and special classes where pupils are educated for the largest part of the school day.



3 Country descriptions

3.1 Introduction

In the next sections the state of the art of special needs education in the participating countries is described. The descriptions are presented in the same ordered way. For each country, first the general inclusion policy is described, including the most important legislative information. Then, the current situation concerning definitions of special needs (categories) and assessment is discussed. Finally the provision for pupils with special needs in each country is described. In Chapter 4 attention is focussed upon the numbers of pupils in special and mainstream settings in all the countries.



3.2 Austria


Inclusion policy

For years in Austria an increasing number of parents have wanted their children with SEN to be integrated in inclusive settings in primary school. Therefore, committed parents and educationalists have been working for more than two decades towards firmly establishing access of pupils with SEN to primary school.

In the 1980s, different models on the joint teaching of disabled and non-disabled pupils were tested in school pilot projects. The 1993 school legislation introduced a marked change to the status quo. As a matter of principle, every pupil with SEN today is allowed to attend primary school. Parents now have a choice as to whether their child should be placed in primary school or special school. Since the school year 1997/98, pupils of compulsory school age with SEN have been entitled to continue compulsory schooling at general secondary school or academic secondary school.

These have been major steps towards including pupils with disabilities into our society. Living and learning in a community are the foundations of human coexistence. Inclusion is not only an act of humanity, but also an integral feature of a fair and open society.

Inclusive instruction presupposes forms of learning which are an enrichment for all pupils, whether they have special needs or not. The best way for pupils to learn is by personal experience, a fact to which schools have become receptive. The traditional methods of instruction are therefore being gradually replaced by more open forms of learning. Not that reading, writing and numeracy are being neglected, it is just the approach to teaching that has changed. Pupils should acquire knowledge in a playful manner, they should learn from one another, work together and thus gradually be led to conscious, independent and target-oriented learning.



In an inclusive class, each individual pupil needs to be given particular consideration. As in hardly any other class, pupils are different, e.g. in terms of their stages of development, their educational backgrounds and their ability to learn. These differences are taken into account and provide the starting point for the design of different learning programmes and scholastic requirements. This prevents the individual pupil from being either over- or under-challenged and paves the way for a successful learning process.

Definition of SEN

If it has been determined that a pupil has SEN because of physical or psychological disabilities or impairments, this means that this pupil is entitled to every form of assistance available, either at primary or at special school.

This assistance may come in many different forms: supplementary teachers, structural adjustments or the procurement of special teaching aids or furniture. This pupil with SEN will be taught according to a special educational programme adjusted to its abilities, so as to be exposed to well-targeted furtherance and challenge.

To be able to decide about whether or not a pupil has SEN, the district school board relies on different expert opinions.

In any event, they will have to obtain an expert opinion, which is normally delivered by a specialist class teacher or a Special Education Centre.

This opinion contains a report on the nature and effects of the pupil's disabilities. It should also mention measures which are conducive to providing the best possible assistance. A medical opinion by a school physician or public health officer must be sought if there are medical questions relating to the pupil's attendance at school.

The district school board may obtain an expert opinion of a school psychologist only with the consent of the parents.



Provision for pupils with SEN

A number of special schools (n = 250) are designated by the province school board as Special Education Centres which have the task of providing and co-ordinating measures in the field of special education for pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. They co-operate with the local school board, compulsory schools in the area and other institutions. They are responsible for expert opinions on SEN, counselling teachers and parents, offering in-service training and collaborating with other experts.

Inclusion of pupils with SEN may be organised as follows:

1. *Mainstream class with full-time support*

In general, these classes consist of 4–6 pupils with SEN (depending upon the category and the degree of disability) and 17–20 non-disabled pupils. The class teacher is supported full time by a specialist teacher. The structure of this class is planned and decided by the district school board in co-operation with the head of the Special Education Centre and the head of the school.

2. *Mainstream classes with part-time support*

The degree of this support depends on the number of pupils with SEN and the category and the degree of their needs. Compared with full-time support it is rather difficult to include only one pupil with special needs because the allocation of a specialist teacher is limited to a few hours a week. In this case the success of inclusion depends mostly on the skills of the class teacher and the transmission of SEN know-how.

3. *Co-operation classes*

Classes in special schools co-operate with mainstream classes in primary or lower secondary schools. They organise joint events, work together in a planned and structured way, to make social inclusion possible.



Special schools

According to Austrian law, the task of special schools is to provide pupils with SEN with special education with reference to their disabilities and needs and to impart educational contents to them equivalent to the curricula of primary schools, general secondary schools and pre-vocational schools as far as possible. The claim for such an individual and differentiated education implies the establishment of different types of special schools within the compulsory school system and different curricula as far as necessary.

Different categories of disabilities correspond to different types of special schools. The structure of special schools shows some differences from mainstream education. The groups are smaller, 8–15 pupils at the most instead of 30. Teachers have followed specialist training and hold specialist qualifications. Some special schools have an autonomous curriculum that may be modified with reference to the SEN of the pupils. e.g. schools for the blind and visually impaired.

There are 11 different types of special schools which cater for pupils with various types of mental or physical disabilities by means of small pupil groups, especially trained teachers, curricula paying attention to the respective disability and by means of using special methods and materials. Education in special schools covers the whole period of compulsory schooling (9 years). In case of need pupils may attend special schools up to 12 years.

The main objective of special schools is to promote and educate pupils with SEN according to their special needs and prepare them for inclusion into the labour market.

Special schools do constitute an alternative to inclusion of pupils in mainstream schools.



Types of special schools

- Special school for pupils with learning disabilities: lessons in these schools follow a special curriculum ; as far as their organisation is concerned, there are four levels:
 - (i) elementary level I comprising years 1–3
 - (ii) elementary level II comprising years 4 and 5
 - (iii) secondary level comprising years 6–8
 - (iv) pre-vocational year special school for physically disadvantaged pupils
- Special school for pupils with speech problems
- Special school for pupils with hearing impairments
- Special school for deaf pupils
- Special school for pupils with visual impairments
- Special school for blind pupils
- Special school for pupils with severe behaviour problems: lessons in these types of special needs schools either follow the curriculum of primary and lower secondary schools or a curriculum which is especially designed to cater for the specific needs of the pupils
- Special school for pupils with mental disabilities: lessons in special schools for these pupils follow a specially designed curriculum; as far as organisation is concerned, the nine years of compulsory schooling are broken down into an initial stage, a core stage and a transition stage
- Hospital schools
- Classes for multi-disabled pupils who are attached to special schools.

All types of special schools cover nine grades, including a particular pre-vocational year which has been implemented since September 2001.



Lessons are given by a class teachers. The number of pupils per class in a special school for blind pupils, deaf pupils or pupils with mental disabilities is limited to eight; the number of pupils per class in a special school for pupils with visual or hearing impairments or a hospital school is limited to ten; that of all other types must not exceed 15.

Special schools may be run as full-day institutions.



3.3 Belgium

3.3.1 Flemish Community

Inclusion policy

Flanders has a long history of a segregated system of special schools. Since 1970, legislation for mainstream and special needs education has been separate. The legal principle of inclusion, however, was included in the 1970 law on special and inclusive education.

The law of February 1997 on primary education incorporates mainstream and special primary education in the same legal framework, respecting the specific characteristics of special education. The principle of inclusion is further specified in the law. Mainstream primary schools should provide pupils with an uninterrupted learning process and are responsible for the education of all pupils of the intended age group, guiding as many pupils as possible by continuous attention and support. Special primary education is described as education that offers adapted education, care and therapy to pupils whose personal development cannot be ensured by mainstream education on a temporary or permanent basis. The balance between the possibilities of the mainstream school and the educational needs of the pupil justifies a referral to special education.

As stated, the new law also describes inclusive primary education. Inclusive primary education is a collaborative link between mainstream and special primary education. It is the intention to enable pupils with a disability and/or learning or educational difficulties to participate in courses and activities in a mainstream school, temporarily or permanently, completely or partially with help from a special school that receives additional resources in order to do so.

Finally, the law creates possibilities for schools to work together by exchanging teacher hours.

Secondary education still has separate legislation for mainstream and special education.




Although there is a clear discussion about inclusion and co-operation between mainstream and special schools at the level of the Department of Education, educational advisory councils and schools, Flanders still has many special schools that function separately from mainstream schools.

Inclusive education started on an experimental basis in 1980. In 1983, it was officially organised for pupils with physical, visual or hearing impairments who had a good chance of success in mainstream education provided they received some additional educational and/or paramedical support. With the circular of 1994, the inclusion policy permitted the following innovations:

- an extension to all types of special education; in addition, pupils with learning and behaviour problems can profit from inclusion support when they return from a special to a mainstream school;
- different forms of inclusive education: not only full-time, but also temporary and partial inclusion is possible;
- extension to the level of higher education;
- the acceptance of the 'equivalence principle': pupils with SEN can graduate from a different programme by replacing lessons approved by the inspector;
- the differentiation of the nature and amount of additional aid depending upon the nature and seriousness of the pupil's disability.

In July 1996, research findings concerning inclusive education were made public. An important result was that special needs education teachers spent a lot of time helping pupils with the subject matter and far less attention was paid to helping the class teacher in dealing with pupils with SEN. The report also showed that there was too little attention being paid to the socio-emotional aspects of inclusion. Furthermore, the study highlighted a need for a different system of funding based upon the specific needs of pupils, the need for more facilities for consultation and support and a need for in-service training.

In general, inclusion is still seen as extra support for pupils who have the capacity to meet the normal expectations of the



mainstream school. For pupils with a moderate or severe disability, e.g. pupils with learning difficulties, inclusion is still very difficult in practice.


In the school year 1999–2000 the Department of Education started a project on inclusion of pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulties in mainstream primary schools. There were two reasons why inclusion was tried out with this target group: first these pupils had been left out of the inclusion policy up to now, and secondly the inclusion of these pupils would force class teachers to adapt the mainstream curriculum. To do this, additional support has been given to the class teacher by a colleague from a special school.

Because of these positive experiences, the Flemish Minister of Education has decided to enlarge the project from 20 up to 50 pupils. In this way the Department of Education will be trying to get the principles of inclusion more accepted in schools, governing bodies, and so on.

As of the school year 1993/94, the Flemish Minister of Education established a programme ‘extending care’ to intensify provision in mainstream nursery and primary schools. This centres upon an increase in the attention paid by schools to differences among pupils with regard to learning possibilities and learning aspirations in terms of aptitude, background, age and gender. The aim is to achieve a better approach to learning problems and a reduction of the number of pupils who repeat a year.

The priorities of the project are:

- introducing or optimising a pupil monitoring system;
- optimising working methods in the classroom;
- optimising co-operation in the school;
- optimising co-operation with parents;
- co-operation with the guidance centre;
- co-operation with a special school (voluntary, but with the possibility of exchanging teacher hours from the mainstream to the special school to get weekly support);
- an engagement to ask for guidance and in-service training.



Parallel to this programme another has already been going on since 1990 focusing on the problems of migrant pupils within education. This programme, called 'Education Priority Policy', has tried to bring about structural changes in the way primary and secondary teachers deal with the differences between pupils. Schools get additional resources to work on language teaching, intercultural education, prevention and remediation of learning problems and co-operation with parents.

The ultimate goal is the enhancement of the competence of class teachers in dealing with pupils with SEN. Both projects are based on conditional funding. Schools receive additional resources on the basis of a clear project approach for the target group.

Recent developments illustrate a genuine concern to provide a system of mainstream education that is more appropriate to meet the real diversity among pupils. This applies to pupils with disabilities as well as pupils with other special needs, e.g. pupils from immigrant, refugee or underprivileged families and so on.

Because of this and the experiences with the two projects described above, a new Decree on Equal Opportunities in Education was passed in Parliament in June 2002. This new legislation has three lines of force:

- The rights of parents and pupils to be enrolled in the school of their choice. The reasons for schools not to do so are very clear defined. As far as pupils with SEN are concerned, the new legislation states that referral of a pupil to another school has to be based on a description of the 'carrying-capacity of the school' and after conversation with the parents, consultation and advice of the school guidance centre and taking into account of the additional resources available. In every case of refusal of referral, schools have to give a written statement to the parents and the chairman of a local discussion platform.
- Secondly, local discussion platforms are created on the level of municipalities or regions. The participants of these platforms are schools, governing bodies, guidance centres,



representatives of parents, teachers and pupils, representatives of the target groups, and so on. The aim is to discuss the unequal opportunities for pupils and youngsters in the area and to discuss proposals of referral from one school to another.

- Finally ‘extending care’ and ‘education priority policy’ are incorporated into one inclusive policy of additional support to schools to ameliorate their way of working with the target groups.


At the end of the 1990s a debate was organised within the Flemish Education Council on ‘Inclusive Education’ and a document was published on 7 July 1998. The aim was to raise awareness on the process of school improvement in order to provide quality education for all pupils.

At the beginning of 2002 the Flemish Minister of Education brought out a discussion paper on inclusion and the future educational policy for pupils with SEN who are enrolled in special schools at this moment. Given the situation of an extended system of special school this policy paper describes ways of working to bring about more inclusive education in the near future. This document has been discussed in the Flemish Parliament and has been commented upon by email from mainstream and special schools, parents, guidance centres and so on. The comments have been analysed and the Department is now preparing the implementation of the innovation.

Definitions of SEN/disability

In spite of the discussion on inclusion, most people still see the special needs education system as most appropriate for pupils and young people who need special education because of their pedagogical needs and requirements. The law for primary education and the separate law for secondary special needs education divide special education into eight types or pedagogical settings.

Each type is characterised by its own target objective, didactic content, teaching methods and organisation and is adapted to



the specific educational needs of the pupils for whom it is intended.

This principle was already present in the 1970 Act on Special Needs Education and constituted a break with the philosophy underlying the provisions made by other ministries dealing with disabled people. The law focused on the needs of the pupil rather than on his/her disability. It emphasised an educational instead of a medical or therapeutic approach. Unfortunately, it proved very difficult to find a satisfactory operational definition of the concept of need. Therefore there is still confusion between the concept of educational type (referring to an organisation of teaching) and the concept of disability (referring to the evaluation of the deficits presented by the pupil) in defining the types of special education.

The current types of special education are:

- Type 1 for pupils with a mild learning difficulty; this type is not organised at the level of the nursery school;
- Type 2 for pupils with a moderate or severe learning difficulty;
- Type 3 for pupils with severe emotional and/or behavioural problems;
- Type 4 for pupils with a physical disability;
- Type 5 for pupils with severe health problem or long-term illness;
- Type 6 for pupils with a visual impairment;
- Type 7 for pupils with a hearing problem;
- Type 8 for pupils with severe learning problems which cannot be explained by an intellectual disability; this type is not organised at the nursery and secondary school level.

Regardless of the types of special education, secondary education is divided into four educational tracks that differ mainly in the aims of education.



- Track 1 Known as 'social adaptation', aims at contributing to an active and worthwhile life for those who are unable to take part in active work life even in a sheltered workshop, because of the seriousness of their disability. Pupils are taught to live as independently as possible in a sheltered living environment (e.g. a day-centre or an activity centre). This track can be organised for types of special education 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7, and lasts for at least four years.
- Track 2 Known as 'social and vocational adaptation', can be organised for the same types of special education. In addition to general and social learning, it also provides work training in order to enable pupils to be included in a sheltered/protected work environment. The training lasts for at least four years and is divided into two phases. Vocational training courses outside the school are also organised.
- Track 3 Known as 'vocational training', provides pupils with general and social training plus vocational training. It can be organised for types of special education 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7. The pupils are prepared for inclusion into a normal employment and living environment. The training is comparable with standard vocational education and lasts five years.
- Track 4 Known as 'transition or qualification training', provides secondary education similar to the general, technical, vocational, or an artistic curriculum of mainstream full-time secondary education and is also structured in the same way. The pupils follow the programme of mainstream education under the condition that educational methods are provided which are adapted to their needs or that the time to acquire the programme can be extended as required.




Assessment

In principle, special needs education is only considered for pupils whose needs are insufficiently catered for by the education resources available within the mainstream school. The new legal definition of special needs education (Decree, 1997) is based on a concept of special needs. Special needs education is defined as education, based on a pedagogical project, that provides adapted schooling, care and therapy for pupils whose general personal development cannot be guaranteed, temporarily or permanently, in a mainstream school, or where such a guarantee is insufficient. The main reason for referral to special needs education is not the pupil's problem alone, but is also related to the difficulties or incapacity of the mainstream school to provide for the optimal development of all pupils (Decree on Equal Opportunities in Education, June 2002). Referral has to do with the balance between the educational possibilities within a mainstream school and the educational needs of an individual pupil.

To be enrolled in a special school, two documents from a guidance centre (a psycho-medical-social centre) are needed. The first document is a certificate stating that the pupil may benefit from special education, indicating the type, level and, if appropriate, form of special secondary education the pupil needs. The second document justifies this certificate, and contains a synthesis of the psychological, medical, social and pedagogical examination. This multidisciplinary report must conclude that a pupil has a real need to attend a special school. In discussion with the representative organisations of guidance centres the Department of Education is preparing new guidelines so that referral will be based far more on the examination of the carrying-capacity of the school and the pedagogical and didactical approach needed for a pupil rather than on the limitations of the pupil.

The guidance centre mainly plays an advisory role. The parents receive the certificate, which allows – rather than forces – them to enrol their child in a special school of their choice, which organises the specific type of special education the child needs. Special needs education is a right, never an obligation. The



certificate is returned to the parents when their child leaves the school.

A copy of the report is sent to the school. This report, together with the findings of the school team itself, allows the school team to direct the pupil towards the most suitable group, to set the objectives to be attained and to work out an Individual Educational Plan corresponding to the pupil's needs with the help of the guidance centre. In specific cases, a supplementary advice can be asked from the Consultative Commission for Special Education.

Admission to inclusive education requires a certificate of acceptance, just like admission to special education. This certificate refers to an 'inclusion plan'. This inclusion plan is the result of consultation among all parties involved: the pupil or his or her parents, the mainstream school, the school for special education and the counselling centres.

Provision for pupils with SEN

Special education services are organised in three different forms: full-time special education, inclusive special needs education and special needs education at home.

Full-time special needs education is organised at three levels. In total, Flanders has 93 special nursery schools, 198 special primary schools, and 115 special secondary schools. The special schools are categorised according to the different types of SEN as described above. In Flanders there are no part-time or full-time special classes. In order to promote inclusion in mainstream schools type 1 (mild learning difficulties) is not organised at pre-primary level and type 8 (severe learning problems) is not organised at either pre-primary or secondary level. Special needs education can be followed from the ages of 2 to 6 until 21 and in some cases even longer.

Within the framework of *inclusive education*, as a form of co-operation between mainstream and special schools, teachers and other professionals of the special school give additional support to pupils with SEN in a mainstream school. The nature



and amount of support depends on the type of special needs and the degree of disability. Support can be permanent or temporary. When the pupil's disability is moderate or mild, support is meant to be temporary, extending to no more than two years per school level. Only for severe disabilities (deafness or blindness) can assistance be permanent. Limited support over one school year is provided for pupils with specific learning or behavioural problems who return to a mainstream school after a stay of at least one year in a special school.

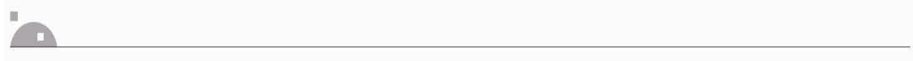
Disabled pupils who, because of their disability, are permanently unable to attend a school, have right to permanent *education at home*, for four hours a week. Home education is provided by a special school in the nearby environment of the home.

Special educational provision *in mainstream schools* consists of, besides inclusive education as described above, remedial teachers and additional teaching hours in the framework of the inclusive project that is focused on enhancing the care for pupils with SEN within mainstream nursery, primary and secondary schools (see above).

Pupils with a disability in mainstream schools have also access to special learning aids such as technical tools, translation of study books (into Braille for example) and other materials. The head teacher of the mainstream school must apply for these materials. A commission decides upon allocations.

In some cases schools have access to external therapeutic services (e.g. rehabilitation centres) who provide help within school time.

Finally, a network of centres for pupil guidance, CLBs (the present psycho-medical-social centres), provides psychological, pedagogical, social and medical guidance to pupils enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. The new CLB centres will be concerned with learning problems, social/emotional problems, school and career guidance and medical follow-up of all pupils. It is clearly stated that pupils with SEN are a priority. In all of these domains they are required to



focus on prevention, development, remedial care and support for school staff. Intervention may be direct to the pupil and/or indirect, focusing upon the educational environment, especially teachers and parents.



3.3.2 French Community


Inclusion policy

In Belgium, the organisation of special needs education is similar for the French and the Flemish communities. There are eight types of special schools and the special education provision is concentrated in segregated special schools. The special school provides education for pupils who cannot receive education in mainstream schools.

Since 1986, Belgium has had a law regarding inclusion and this law describes two inclusion models. The first model concerns special schools for physically disabled, blind and for deaf pupils. Pupils with these problems must be able to attend lessons in mainstream schools and obtain a certificate. Pupils stay on the roll of the mainstream school, without the label of being a pupil of a special school, but they can use the free bus that is organised for the special school. The pupils follow mainstream education full-time with four hours support per pupil from a teacher of a special school. The initiative to include a certain pupil may come from the team of the special school, the association that guides the pupil during school time (psycho-medical-social centre for the special school (PMSS) and/or psycho-medical-social centre for the mainstream school (PMS)), the parents of the child, or the pupil himself or herself when s/he is over 18 years of age.

The second inclusion model concerns all eight types of special school. Here, pupils remain on the roll of the special school, but receive education in a mainstream school with help from the special school (psychological, educational and/or therapeutic support). The inclusion can be part-time (the pupil spends part of the time in a mainstream school and the other part in a special school) or full-time (with support of a special school), temporary, individual or collective (a group that is included).

The mainstream school must provide instruction adapted to the needs and possibilities of the pupil. The inclusion can be organised at nursery, primary and secondary school level and can also be organised between two different types of special



school. The decision is taken by the team of the school and the PMSS together with the parents and the head of the mainstream school. A protocol describes this decision and the agreement of all partners (of the special and mainstream school), the complete inclusion project with all modalities and the contact between the two schools. This report is sent to the Inspectorates who are responsible (one for the special school and one for the mainstream school) for the assessment. Each partner can decide to stop the inclusion after notifying the Inspectorate.


Definitions of SEN/disability

The French Community has a similar organisation structure to that of Flanders. There are eight types of SEN:

- Type 1 for pupils with mild learning difficulties;
- Type 2 for pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulty;
- Type 3 for pupils with severe emotional and/or behavioural problems;
- Type 4 for pupils with a physical disability;
- Type 5 for pupils who have to be in a hospital or another medical institution for a longer period of time;
- Type 6 for pupils with a visual impairment;
- Type 7 for pupils with a hearing problem;
- Type 8 for pupils with complex learning disabilities.

Assessment

A pupil's difficulties may first be recognised by parents, the PMS centres that work with mainstream schools, the teacher, or the team of the mainstream school. As the next step, the pupil is tested in the PMS centre. The centre gives the parents advice about the most appropriate school for their child. The parents are free to choose a mainstream or a special school. When they want their child to stay in a mainstream school, the child receives no special help. When the parents decide to



follow the advice of the PMS, the pupil is obliged to attend the kind of teaching the PMS considers the most appropriate. The development of the pupil in a special school is monitored by the PMSS. If necessary, the team of the school and the PMSS can decide to change the kind of teaching. The pupil can leave the special school and return to a mainstream school every year in September. This is not part of an inclusion process; the pupil becomes a mainstream pupil again and no longer receives help from the special school.

If necessary, a pupil of six years old can stay one or two years longer in the nursery special school after a decision of the school team and the PMSS. A 12-year-old pupil can go to a special secondary school, to a mainstream secondary school, or stay in the primary special school for one or two years. The school team and the PMSS make this decision together with the parents. The pupil can stay in a special school until the age of 21.

Provision for pupils with SEN

The French Community of Belgium has a separate system for special schools and mainstream schools. Furthermore, special support is also possible within mainstream schools. The special school supports the included pupils with SEN and also the team of a mainstream school. A teacher of a special school co-ordinates the intervention of the team. This teacher supports the included pupils who are still on the roll of the special school and other pupils who need help. The number of professionals from special schools that work in an inclusion project is calculated by the special school in the usual way. However, the amount of time the teacher spends on helping the pupils is flexible.



3.4 Denmark

Inclusion policy

In August 1994, a new Act on the *Folkeskole* (primary and lower secondary schools) came into force. This Act was the third and final stage in an extensive reform of both the government and the content of the *Folkeskole*. The crucial innovation was in the organisation of the teaching content and in the improvement of the methods used for the evaluation of the benefit and the effect of teaching for and upon pupils. Another innovation was the provision that teaching individual subjects shall interact with teaching interdisciplinary topics and problems. The comprehensive concept enables pupils to remain in the same group with the same classmates from the 1st to the 9th form, sharing the same experiences with peers from different backgrounds and covering the whole range of abilities.

A fundamental principle of Danish educational policy is that everyone should have the same access to education and training that is basically free of charge from the time a child is five or six years old. All pupils are entitled to instruction that is adapted to their situation, the possibilities and the needs of the individual pupils.

The purpose of special needs education and other special pedagogic assistance is to encourage the development of pupils with SEN in accordance with the guidelines, which are stated in the Provision of Purpose in the Act of the *Folkeskole*. It must be ensured that pupils leave school with a basis for further education or employment.

The Danish government sets up the act, the rules, the goals and framework for education. The local school authorities are responsible for the education of all pupils. The responsibility for the expenses for special needs education and other special educational assistance lies with the local council (the municipality), except for expenses for pupils with extensive needs or support (8,700 or approximately 1.3% in 2000). Expenses for these pupils must be paid by the county council,



except for a certain rate amount that must be paid by the pupil's local council.


Definitions of SEN/disability

In Denmark, many attempts have been made to define special education. This is a difficult task, as the understanding of special needs education varies over counties and because this may lead to mixing content, structure and philosophy which has a blurring effect upon the distinctions. In recent years efforts have been made to define the concept on the basis of the objective of a school for all. Special needs education constitutes the potential of the school to support pupils whose needs are not fully satisfied in the mainstream education process. However, special needs education is not supposed to be an alternative, which exempts the pupils from the general provision. The goals of education apply to all pupils, but pupils can follow different tracks to get as close to these goals as possible.

Special education and other special pedagogical assistance is given to pupils, whose development requires special consideration or support, which cannot be given within the framework of mainstream education. These measures of special needs education must be initiated as early as possible, as soon as it is obvious that a pupil's normal development is at stake.

Assessment

It is presumed that if a pupil needs special education, or if the pupil's schooling causes concern in other respects, the pupil can be recommended for a pedagogical-psychological assessment. This recommendation is made by the class teacher, or the school health service, but the parents and the head of the school can also ask for an assessment. After consulting the parents, the head of the school sends the recommendation to the Pedagogical-Psychological Advice Office. This office assesses whether the pupil has a need for special education or other special-pedagogical assistance. The office may discuss the pupil's situation with teachers or others



who forwarded the recommendation and use the information to make proposals concerning arrangements that are considered appropriate.


When the Pedagogical-Psychological Advice Office assesses a special need, a report is written. The parents must be informed about the content of the report. A recommendation for special needs education is given after consultation with the parents. The decision to start with special education, or other special pedagogical assistance, is made by the school head. The office or school head need to have strong arguments to overrule the parents when they do not agree with the need for special education for their child. The Pedagogical-Psychological Advice Office monitors the development of pupils who are referred to special education. At least once a year, the office decides to continue, alter or stop the special education.

Provision for pupils with SEN

Special education can be arranged in different ways:

1. the pupil remains in a mainstream class and receives:
 - (a) education in one or more subjects as a supplement to general teaching;
 - (b) special needs education that substitutes the pupil's participation in normal education in one or more subjects;
2. the pupil's membership of a mainstream school class stops and their entire education is given in a special class either within a mainstream school or within a special school;
3. the pupil is a member of either a mainstream class or a special class, but receives education in both types of classes.

Special classes exist for pupils with learning difficulties, dyslexia, visual impairment, hearing problems and for pupils with a physical disability.



In 2001 the Danish Ministry of Education launched a new three-year programme that aims to improve and maintain the quality of special needs education.

As one of its goals the KVIS programme ('Quality in Special Needs Education') aims to increase inclusiveness in Danish schools, thereby ensuring that all pupils receive an offer of quality education as close to their home and public school as possible.

The programme deals with eight thematic areas set out by the Danish Parliament: individual educational planning and teaching; parent-school collaboration; school structuring and teaching means; management and teacher qualifications; transition from compulsory school to further education and employment; co-ordination of school and leisure time; infants and, finally, knowledge mediation, responsibility and division of tasks.

A central committee with representatives of organisations involved in the work of the Danish Folkeskole manages the programme. Regional committees, composed of parents, politicians and representatives of disability organisations, map out and plan the development and strategy for increased quality in schools and institutions and a cross-disciplinary 'Think Tank' has been set up to work with quality indicators.

As a result of this programme, networks between schools are being established and ICT supported courses for collaborative teacher groups are being offered. International co-operation is a part of the programme's strategy to further the qualitative aim in the project. The programme will be evaluated in 2004.



3.5 England and Wales

Inclusion policy

The present policy regarding inclusion is grounded in the Education Act 1996 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (part 2). The expectation is that a pupil will normally attend a mainstream school unless this is incompatible with the pupil receiving the educational provision that s/he requires, the efficient education of other pupils or the wishes of the child's parent(s). From September 2002 schools are required not to treat disabled pupils less favourably on account of their disability and to take reasonable steps to ensure that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage to those who are not disabled. Schools may not discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions arrangements.


Definition of SEN/disability

Section 312 of the Education Act 1996 states that a pupil has SEN if s/he has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her. A pupil has a learning difficulty if s/he:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of pupils of the same age;
- has a disability which prevents or hinders him/her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for pupils of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority;
- is under compulsory school age and falls within either of the two definitions above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for him/her.

Section 1 (1) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 states that:

a person has a disability for the purposes of this Act if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial



and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (Department for Education and Skills, 2002, para 7.52) identifies four broad areas of needs (communication and interaction; cognition and learning; behaviour, emotional and social development; and sensory and/or physical) but stresses that individual pupil profiles may span these.

Assessment

The *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* promotes a graduated model of response to a pupil's needs, incorporating intervention and assessment and moving from special interventions designed and implemented by the pupil's mainstream class (primary) or subject (secondary) teacher, through those involving specialists or more experienced colleagues within the school, to those involving expert and specialist visiting staff from area support services and/or special schools. A minority of pupils (currently approximately 3 per cent of the school population, with local variations according to different policies) will have needs so substantial that they cannot be met within the normal resources available to a school or setting: in these cases, a pupil's parents or school may request a statutory (multi-disciplinary) assessment, which may lead to the issue of a statement of SEN in which the local education authority lays out, and ultimately takes responsibility for, the pupil's needs and the provision required to meet those needs

At all stages, emphasis is put upon the necessity for: early intervention, positive partnerships with the pupil's parent(s)/carer(s), the involvement of the pupil; regular, appropriate target-setting, monitoring and review; and a multi-disciplinary approach. Clear and accurate record-keeping is required as evidence of action before the scope of intervention is widened.



Provision for pupils with SEN

In England and Wales, the mainstream class teacher is, in the first place, responsible for meeting the needs of all pupils in his/her class.

All mainstream schools are required to have a member of staff to undertake the duties of the SEN co-ordinator (SENCo) (the responsibilities may be shared among colleagues). The key responsibilities of the co-ordinator include:

- overseeing the operation of the school's SEN policy;
- co-ordinating provision for pupils with SEN
- liaising with and advising colleagues – both teaching staff and learning support assistants;
- overseeing the records (nature of needs, progress, intervention, targets etc.) of all pupils identified as having SEN;
- liaising with parents of pupils with SEN;
- contributing to the in-service training of staff (both formal and informal);
- liaising with people from external agencies such as visiting support teachers, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, social service staff, health service staff, personnel from voluntary agencies and, in secondary schools, specialist staff from the careers service.

The majority of pupils with SEN are educated within mainstream schools in England and Wales. Just under 40 per cent of pupils with statements are placed in special schools, Pupil Referral Units (for pupils with behavioural difficulties) or independent schools (Department for Education and Skills (2001)). Pupils in these settings may have significant contact with mainstream schools as many special schools have link arrangements with mainstream schools. Most pupils with SEN in mainstream schools will be placed in mainstream classes though there is a wide range of opportunities for flexible arrangements to meet particular needs: for example, withdrawal to teach special skills such as signing or braille, to introduce concepts for pupils with hearing impairment, to deliver mobility training for pupils with a



visual impairment, to provide structured language work for pupils with a specific learning difficulty.

Many support teachers and support assistants work within mainstream classrooms and are instrumental in ensuring a differentiated approach within the classroom. Furthermore, analysis of effective practice is increasingly encouraging therapists to work within classrooms as well.

Provision for pupils with SEN is also affected by the structure of teaching groups and classes. Increasingly, literacy and numeracy work within primary schools is undertaken in ability-related groupings; secondary schools usually 'set' by ability for mathematics and languages though practice varies as regards other subjects such as science, humanities and English, particularly between the ages of 11+ and 14+ (key stage 3).

All pupils follow the National Curriculum, which is sufficiently flexible to allow it to be relevant and appropriate for all pupils, regardless of their SEN (for example, pupils can work on programmes of study designed for an age group lower than their chronological age). In the last two years of statutory education (14+-16+, key stage 4), there are opportunities to provide for pupils with SEN by means of alternative curricula (for example, courses in vocational settings or with a focus on life skills) which may be more appropriate for some pupils than following a course leading to the formal 16+ leaving examination, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).



3.6 Finland

Inclusion policy

In Finland, recent public discussion upon values and policies concerning disabled people and the provisions of special needs education has influenced the national reform of civil rights. According to the Comprehensive Instruction Law (1999) everyone receives education in accordance with his or her age, potential and SEN. Everyone has the right to a high-quality education. Within education, co-operation with the parents of the pupil is necessary.

The Comprehensive Instruction Law places an obligation upon the municipality to provide comprehensive school teaching for all pupils of compulsory school age within its territory. The municipality can discharge the obligation by collaborating with other municipalities, or by engaging other educational institutes such as state-owned special schools.

The reforms of school administration in the 1990s with decentralisation of decision-making to the municipalities has decreased the number of special schools, while special classes have been founded in mainstream schools. The state maintains eight special schools providing comprehensive school education. These schools are primarily intended for pupils with hearing or visual impairments or with a physical or other impairment. The state-owned special schools also serve as national centres for development and services and negotiate related policies with the National Board of Education.

Special education is provided to all pupils who are unable to cope with mainstream instruction because of intellectual or physical disability, learning disorder or for some other reason. Such pupils, who have minor learning difficulties or problems in adjusting to work, have the right to receive special needs education within mainstream instruction. The law does not categorise pupils into 'types' of disabilities.

It is the duty of the municipality and the individual school to include pupils with SEN in the mainstream educational system.



Educational, social and health authorities must co-operate in arranging instruction for pupils with SEN.

The first alternative for providing special needs education is to include pupils with SEN in mainstream classes and, when necessary, provide special needs education in small teaching groups. Only when this is not feasible is the second alternative considered: the provision of special needs education in a special group, class or school.

Disabled pupils have a right to pre-primary education for two years, provided by either the educational or the social authorities. The educational authorities have the responsibility for arranging and implementing this education. The municipality may also arrange additional education for one school year for pupils who have already completed their compulsory education.

The Finnish government has approved a Development Plan for the period 2000–2004. The overall principles of this educational development are high quality, equal opportunities and lifelong learning.

The National Board of Education and the Ministry of Education are launching a research and development project for the period 2000–2004, seeking to improve the comprehensive school in terms of its flexibility both content-wise and structurally. The part of the project focused on special needs education is based upon the findings of an evaluation report on the state of special education. The purpose is to improve the operational organisation and inclusion practices of special needs education at the regional, municipal, school and pupil level, as well as to gather information on the success and feasibility of inclusion practices. Another goal is to improve the identification of pupils in need of special help, as well as to enhance their access to appropriate support and instruction.

Among others, the following projects are being undertaken during 2002-2004:

1. Renovation of national and municipal curricula. Separate curricula of special education will be abolished and all pupils




will use the same curriculum individualised by individual education plan. In the curricula the concept 'Need for special support' will be used when referring to special education.

2. The pupil welfare-services are to be included in the curriculum and municipalities and schools will be obliged to include the services they offer in the curriculum.
3. Development of inclusion and production of models regarding municipality, school and pupil-level planning, organisation and implementation of inclusive special needs education in co-operation with various interest groups.
4. The statistics on provision, resources and costs of special needs education will be elaborated upon in order to obtain a continuous view on the state of special needs education nationwide, as well as to acquire comparative data on the effects of regional and municipal differences.
5. Several projects are developing the virtual school for the needs of special education according to the national strategy. The actors of these projects represent private and public sector, state, municipalities, universities and research centres, both in the humanities and technical areas.
6. Several projects for preventing exclusion of pupils by developing productive learning models and models to teach and support pupils with mental illnesses.

Definitions of SEN/disability

Pupils with SEN are not categorised by legislation, but the classification and grouping for various sectors of special education are determined by the educational needs of these pupils. SEN is divided into nine basic categories.

1. pupils with a mild learning difficulty;
2. pupils with a moderate learning difficulty;
3. pupils with a hearing impairment;
4. pupils with a visual impairment;
5. pupils with a physical and other impairment;
6. pupils with emotional and social disorders;
7. pupils with specific learning disorders;

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8. pupils with a severe intellectual deficiency;
 9. pupils with problems such as epilepsy, diabetes and other problems that do not fall into the other categories.

For pupils with specific learning disorders, part-time education is provided.

Assessment

Transferring a pupil to special education is possible when he or she cannot cope with studying in a mainstream class because of one or more learning disabilities, illnesses or handicaps. In such cases, the school board makes decisions regarding the provision of special education. Before making this decision, the school board has to hear the opinion of the parents and a specialist. When necessary, the pupil has to undergo a medical and psychological examination by an expert and a social report is made about the pupil and his or her circumstances.

In vocational education the school has the right to decide when the pupil has the right to receive support for SEN.

Provision for pupils with SEN

The number of special schools has decreased from 362 in 1991 to 250 in 2002. On the other hand, the number of separate special needs education classes has increased, a result of groups from closed special schools being incorporated into mainstream comprehensive schools.

The number of specialist teachers and teachers of special classes has increased from 3,290 in year 1994 to 3,685 in 2002. In 2002 1,220 school assistants worked in comprehensive schools. *Special class teachers* work with pupils in special classes. *Specialist teachers* take care of pupils who are in mainstream classes, who need part-time specialist training and who suffer from specific learning difficulties, or more generally face problems with studying and concentrating, or with their social relations.




3.7 France

Inclusion policy

In France, education is compulsory from the age of 6 to 16. The educational system is divided into three levels: primary school, which includes two sub-levels, nursery school and elementary school (8 years); lower secondary school, called *collège* (4 years), and sixth-form *collège* called *lycée* (3 years). During their last year at the lycée, pupils are allowed to pass their A Level certificate, or *Baccalauréat* (general, technological or vocational direction).

Primary school is divided into three cycles. Nursery school is attended by pupils from the age of 3 to 6, and nearly 100% of the country's pupils actually go to nursery school. During the first two years they acquire initial learning skills. The last year is part of the basic learning cycle that also includes the first two elementary school years. During the last three elementary school years the learning skills acquired by the pupils are developed and reinforced. Secondary school teaching includes the *collège* and the *lycée*. Lower secondary school is divided into three cycles: adaptation (first year), a central cycle (two years) and an orientation cycle (one year). After the *collège*, young people are guided towards a general, technological or vocational *lycée*. Over 92% of all pupils continue to pursue their studies after the age of 17. Around 14% accomplish their primary cycle in a private school (20% at secondary level). However, most private schools have signed contracts with the State and are part of the country's educational public service.

Since the mid 1970s, the French educational system has undergone a series of changes which may be divided into three broad categories. First of all, within the legal and regulatory framework of the current French educational system, a wide range of diversified teaching methods for mainstream classes have been developed. This variety appears indispensable to deal with heterogeneous populations. Secondly, the administration system for National Education has, as with all French State institutions, been thoroughly reorganised in compliance with territorial decentralisation laws, which have




transferred responsibilities from the central State to local authorities (regions, departments, districts). This territorial decentralisation was accompanied by an administrative deconcentration process which has transferred responsibilities from central administrative bodies (Ministry) to regional and local National Education services (*Rectorats*, Academic Board of Inspectors). These two converging processes have enabled the system to adapt better to local or regional conditions. Finally, since the Law of 10 July 1989 was passed, the very concept of the right of all pupils to receive an education has been redefined since it is no longer confined to compulsory school attendance. Every pupil is entitled to attend nursery school at the age of three.

Furthermore, every young person must be offered education through which he/she can acquire a professional qualification, if he/she so desires. This concept is totally non-discriminatory as it applies to all pupils or teenagers whether they have specific educational needs or not. Furthermore, a memorandum issued on 18 November, 1991, co-signed by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Affairs, specifies that the school, *collège* or *lycée* which is the nearest to the place of residence of a disabled pupil is in principle supposed to receive him/her for his/her school inclusion. Likewise it is considered a priority, in socially deprived areas, to begin educating pupils in nursery schools as soon as they reach the age of two.

Special education is not under the sole jurisdiction of the Ministry of National Education. It is also supervised, to a large extent, by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Affairs, as well as by the Department of Justice. Special education is based on a tightly knit network of classes, schools and special establishments and it must be emphasised that a policy designed to prevent learning difficulties has been implemented. The general trend today is to avoid, insofar as possible, sending a pupil to a special institution when it is not absolutely necessary. Moreover, the current policy is to minimise the time spent by the pupil in a special institution.

The system's inclusion strategy should also be enhanced by the flexibility made possible by decentralised decision-making.



Local decisions make it easier for various institutions and nearby services to co-operate. However, despite a clear-cut policy seeking to develop educational inclusion, the practical implementation of this policy encounters a number of difficulties. Several problems and obstacles remain. They must be overcome in order to help provide proper education for the most vulnerable pupils.


Definitions of SEN/disability

The Outline Law for Disabled People (30 June 1975) is characterised by the fact that it does not define a disability or a disabled person. French legislators deliberately chose to proceed otherwise: they created a local body, the Commission Départementale d'Education Speciale (CDES), which decides what financial or learning assistance measures should be specifically offered to each individual pupil. No action can be taken without prior consent of the pupil's parents. With this provision the only possible definition is the following: 'a disabled pupil is a pupil for whom the CDES has taken a decision'.

Another provision of the law should be stressed: CDES measures are never permanent and they are all limited in time. Thus, the CDES can provide help for pupils who have a sensory, motor or intellectual disability, a chronic disease or disability. On the other hand, it is competent to orient pupils only towards certain establishments and services (called medical-educational). As a result (as the CDES can only take decisions concerning a referral to medical and educational settings and services), other pupils can be guided towards institutions or entrusted to various services: by a medical decision; in compliance with a ruling issued by a juvenile court judge who considers that they are 'in danger'; or in accordance with measures of 'social assistance to pupils'. These pupils also have 'specific needs', but their guidance is not determined by the CDES.

Assessment

As explained above, in France the specific needs of pupils are evaluated according to various procedures and under the




jurisdiction of different authorities. For pupils and adolescents (up to the age of 20) subject to the Outline Law for Disabled People (1975), Special Educational Commissions (CDES) are in charge of deciding guidance measures. The pupil can be oriented towards a mainstream or a special learning context (his/her programme may include, if required, a personal inclusion project and a rehabilitation or therapeutic follow-up programme monitored by special services). She/he can also be sent to a medical-educational establishment. No decision to guide a pupil towards these schools, services or establishments can be taken without a CDES authorisation.

When guidance measures do not require financial assistance by social security agencies, the CDES delegates its responsibilities to Pre-elementary, Elementary or Secondary Commissions (CCPEs or CCSDs) in charge of monitoring individual cases over smaller geographical areas. Statistical surveys concerning pupils and adolescents monitored by Special Education Commissions are conducted in compliance with the standard classification defined by the World Health Organisation in its French version published in January 1989 under the title: *Classification of Deficiencies, Disabilities and Disadvantages*.

The CDES is also competent to grant a Special Education Allowance called Allocation d'Education Spéciale (AES) to the person permanently in charge of raising and educating a pupil. However, AES allowances are subject to a specific condition: the pupil's disability rate must be at least equal to 50%. This rate is evaluated according to the pupil's health condition and by referring to an official scale (latest publication: November 1993). An AES is allocated for a limited period of time: payments can be terminated as soon as the pupil's health has improved. The AES can be granted to children and adolescents from ages 0 to 20. Subsequently, the adult person may be entitled, according to his/her health condition and degree of self-sufficiency, to a Disabled Adult Allowance and in some cases to other types of aid.

It is important to stress the fact that many pupils stand to benefit from preventive measures and special aids (without any



involvement of medical and educational settings and services) whether at school or outside without a decision by a commission. Assistance measures in the school context are offered to the family by educational teams who are under the responsibility of the school principal. Help can be financed outside the school context by Social Security agencies, upon presentation of a medical certificate. Other forms of assistance (for instance, free help for homework) can be set up by territorial authorities (districts, *départements*) or by associations, such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). They are usually offered to families by social services.


Provision for pupils with SEN

As explained above, specialist education programmes are under the responsibility of various ministries. The Ministry of National Education designs preventive and back-up programmes for pupils who have difficulties in school. It also directly manages a certain number of classes, sections and institutions for pupils and adolescents with various types of disabilities. Furthermore, it has a legal obligation to pay for learning expenses, wherever the pupil attends school and/or receives medical care. The Ministry of National Education cannot be relieved of its responsibility for paying teachers who take care of pupils with specific needs, whatever sector they belong to. The Ministry in charge of Social Affairs holds jurisdiction over all the establishments of the medical-educational sector. It monitors socio-educational institutions, although they are financed by *département* (local/regional regional) budgets. Some of these institutions are also licensed by the Ministry of Justice, which is directly in charge of very few establishments and services. Last of all, the Ministry of Public Health controls medical institutions.

National Education Ministry structures


Three types of structures or establishments can be distinguished:

- institutions operating within the framework of 'mainstream' schools, the mission of which is to prevent learning difficulties;

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- institutions in charge of collective and individual inclusion;
 - institutions which provide 'adapted' general and vocational education.

The first category includes special networks (created in April 1990) to provide assistance to pupils who experience difficulties at nursery school and primary levels. These institutions originated in former so-called 'adaptation' structures: adaptation classes and *groupes d'aide psycho-pédagogiques* (GAPPs: psycho-educational groups) created in 1970. These assistance networks include school psychologists and specialist teachers who provide educational or rehabilitation aids to small groups of pupils. Adaptation classes can also be set up (with a maximum of 15 pupils per unit). However, they should not – in principle – educate any pupil for a period exceeding one year. Professional workers of these networks, only step in once families have been informed. Psychological tests and rehabilitation aids cannot occur without prior written consent by the child's family. Over 37% of all special teaching positions are devoted to assistance networks. Their main task is indeed preventive.

Other structures available for school establishments are mostly collective inclusion or 'adapted' teaching structures. Elementary schools include these 'Classes d'Intégration Scolaire' (CLIS). There are 4 types of CLIS: all are aimed at including pupils with intellectual, visual, hearing, or motor disabilities and enable them to attend school. It must be emphasised that for each pupil attending a CLIS a personal inclusion project must have been defined. Moreover, he/she must spend some inclusion time in mainstream classes, according to his/her capacities. Most often, pupils are guided towards the CLIS by the CCPE, but many pupils also receive a CDES letter of notification so as to benefit from a rehabilitation or therapeutic follow-up programme provided by a medical-educational service, which is liable to operate in all various contexts of a pupil's life (school, home, day nursery etc.). These services are often called SESSADs which stands for 'Service d'éducation spécialisée et de soins à domicile' (Special Education and Home Nursing Service).




Structures similar to the CLIS were set up in *collèges* in 1995 for pupils with an intellectual disability: the Unités Pédagogiques d'Intégration (UPIs). These units are still rather rare. They should help include some adolescents into mainstream schools after attending a CLIS or a special institution. Other collective structures are available in *collèges* and *lycées* for adolescents with a sensory or motor deficiency, but they are not called UPIs. Pupils are guided towards these structures by the Commissions d'Éducation Spéciale du Second Degré (CCSDs). The decision of the CCSD is completed, if required, by a letter of notification addressed to the CDES for a follow-up programme by a SESSAD.

A few (around 60) elementary level special schools remain. Originally, they were often created to receive pupils whose health condition was fragile, but now they fulfil variety of tasks: for instance, they receive pupils with sensory deficiencies or a serious illness.

The third category of structures is designed to provide a 'General and Vocational Adapted Teaching' to adolescents, usually in *collège* sections (or SEGPA). There are 1,423 such structures (2000–2001). They receive pupils from ages 12 to 16 and, sometimes up to the age of 17 or 18. These sections are operated by a specific staff: specialist class teachers, vocational lycée teachers; an assistant headmaster co-ordinates teaching methods and practices under the supervision of the Head of the *collège*. The first goal of the SEGPA is to provide its pupils with an education which will allow them access, in time, to a vocational training programme and a level V qualification – that is, a 'Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnel' (CAP: Certificate of Vocational Training).

In spite of all the efforts the number of pupils in the SEGPA sections remained quite stable (about 122,000). The recent trend is to persist with the need to introduce the SEGPA concept in more colleges, in other vocational schools as well as within the working environment. However, things are developing quite slowly because of the difficulties experienced by many teachers when dealing with teenagers known to be particularly difficult.



Last of all, 82 establishments offer boarding facilities to adolescents who also need an adapted general and vocational education: they are called 'Établissements Régionaux d'Enseignement Adapté'. Most of these EREAs receive pupils who experience the same difficulties as those who attend SEGPA, but also have family and social problems requiring that they attend a boarding-school. Some EREAs host pupils who have sensory and motor deficiencies and can provide a lycée level of teaching. They include a medical care unit. One must stress the fact that SEGPA are only sections within an establishment, whereas EREAs are autonomous establishments with their own headmaster.

In order to be guided towards a SEGPA or an EREA, a pupil needs a CCSD letter of notification. As any commission decision, this notification is mandatory for establishments but not for families, which have a right of appeal.

Provision controlled by other ministries

Structures designed for pupils with specific needs, and which are under the jurisdiction of ministries other than the National Education Ministry, are varied and complex. Most institutions and services are managed by associations or private, non-profit, organisations. Several public establishments, representing 20% in terms of facilities, cover three sectors: the medical-educational, the socio-educational and the medical care sectors. In the medical-educational sector, there are two types of structures: mobile services, which focus on early prevention and part-time or full-time boarding schools providing medical care and education to pupils and adolescents with various types of disabilities.

Five categories of medical-educational establishments were set up to receive pupils with an intellectual disability, motor disability, multiple disabilities, hearing disabilities and visual disabilities. Decrees published in 1988 and 1989 were aimed at helping to create or transform some of these establishments into home or school support services providing special needs education and home care. They are called 'SESSAD' (Services d'éducation spécialisée et de soins à domicile). The goal is to



offer the pupil, as much as possible, an ordinary life environment, while providing necessary support structures.

In the socio-educational and medical care sectors, various types of establishments are found to be operating. The socio-educational sector includes mainly Homes for Pupils which are managed by Social Assistance and other service institutions financed by departmental budgets. A number of these establishments are authorised by the Ministry of Justice for pupils who are 'morally in danger' or who are delinquents. Very few establishments are managed directly by the Ministry of Justice. The health sector includes various private or public medical care establishments (paediatric services in hospitals or Homes for Pupils providing medical care).



3.8 Germany


Inclusion policy

In Germany, educational legislation and administration of the educational system are primarily the responsibility of the *Länder*. The right of disabled pupils to education and training appropriate to their needs is enshrined in the *Länder* constitutions and more detailed provisions are set out in the educational legislation of the *Länder*. All the *Länder* have Ministries of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science, which are the highest authorities responsible for education, science and culture.

The instrument for co-operation between the *Land* governments is the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (this conference is called the 'KMK'). Resolutions of the KMK have the status of recommendations. The Ministers are politically committed to transform recommendations into law. The development and organisation of special needs education in the *Länder* were harmonised by several decisions adopted by the KMK.

The Ministry for Education Science and Technology of the Bund (Bundesministerium) is responsible for pilot projects and projects as well as for the upper secondary education and vocational training. Although the *Länder* are generally responsible for education in their own *Land*, in some cases – for instance in developing certain innovations such as the first 'inclusion classes' – the Bund took the initiative and funded quite a number of the pilot studies targeted to inclusion and support of pupils with SEN.

In the last 20 years, the development of inclusion policy has changed towards better educational support for pupils with a disability in inclusive settings. Germany has a differentiated system of special schools to guarantee appropriate support for disabled pupils in the compulsory age. The Ministers noted many common elements in the variety of special education facilities available in the 16 *Länder*. They considered relevant



research work and the positive experience resulting from joint teaching of disabled and non disabled pupils in the same classroom.

The Ministers were in agreement with the current trend to focus on the individual pupil rather than on the type of school or institution. The need for particular individual support thus enjoys priority over the eventual need to send the pupil or adolescent to a special school. Such individual support may be given at any mainstream or vocational school. Today, there is agreement that the aim of education is the inclusion of disabled pupils into professional life and society. Education of the disabled has become the task of all schools. However, a discussion has started about how this aim can be reached. In 1988, the KMK decided that the system of special needs education should be more flexible. Terminology changed from 'the need for special education' (in a special school) to 'special educational needs'. A new understanding of disabilities and educational needs has influenced the development of more inclusion, improved diagnostic techniques, more effective early intervention and prevention, better overall conditions at mainstream schools, more open approaches to instruction and education and a greater appreciation of the benefits for pupils.

In May 1994, the 16 *Länder* of the Federal Republic of Germany developed at their plenary session the Recommendations on Special Needs Education, replacing earlier guidelines of March 1972. This basic paper documents (reveals) the development of special needs education of all German *Bundesländer*.

The Conference drew attention to the following points:

- Considerable experience has been gained in catering for the disabled both in special schools and the mainstream school system.
- People's awareness towards disabled persons has changed positively.
- Effective measures to ensure early diagnosis and early intervention have been developed.



- New educational concepts in pre-school and in mainstream education have increased possibilities for special support in primary education.
- The new technologies offer sophisticated and highly effective learning aids for the disabled.
- Nowadays people consider it more important to send a pupil with SEN to the mainstream school rather than to a remote special boarding school.

The Ministers recommended that any changes should:


- guarantee the necessary amount and quality of special support;
- allow for flexibility in a system combining different degrees of special support;
- ensure that pupils with SEN are given, as far as possible, the same opportunities all over Germany regardless of the place and nature of special support given;
- ensure that disabled as well as non-disabled are given support in accordance with their individual needs and abilities, whenever they are taught together;
- draw on the co-operation of all persons and institutions involved.

The objectives of special support are:

- to safeguard the right to education for all pupils with a disability or who risk becoming disabled;
- to help these pupils to achieve as fully as possible educational and vocational inclusion, participation in social activities and autonomy of life.

Priorities for special support are to stimulate:

- learning motivation;
- mastery of the language (speech, communication, social interaction);
- emotional, intellectual, social, physical, and motor developments, audio and visual abilities.




The Ministers agreed that pupils with SEN could be admitted to mainstream schools, provided the latter were able to offer the necessary educational support, equipment, and facilities. If this was not the case and satisfactory conditions could not be offered, disabled pupils would have to be taught in special (general or vocational) schools.

Great importance should be attached to a variety of provisions such as measures to prevent disabilities, mainstreaming and close co-operation within the different systems, between school and parents, among teachers, between schools and other institutions concerned (e.g. public health agencies, medical services, youth and welfare agencies, therapy centres). The traditional special schools should develop themselves into support centres for prevention and inclusion in mainstream schools. Staff in charge of special support and facilities must be appropriately qualified.

In the years between 1994 and 1999 the KMK focused on the priorities of special needs education on the different levels of development. This has become a specific term in the Federal Republic of Germany: The recommendations for the 'emphasis of individual education support' or '*sonderpädagogische Förderschwerpunkte*' at the level of:

- Learning
- Speech
- Emotion and social development
- Mental development
- Physical development
- Hearing
- Vision
- Overlapping emphasis of support (which differs from *Land to Land*)
- Chronic sickness

Each of these *Förderschwerpunkte* provides information about the education starting point and condition on this level of special educational needs, the phenomenon of individual special needs and their diagnosis, the provision of special needs education and possible placements. The user gets an indication regarding



the level of co-operation and collaboration as well as of the qualification of the staff.

Today, nearly all *Länder* have adapted their educational laws in line with the recommendation of the KMK. Several *Länder* have established advice centres to promote and translate educational legislation into action. This is a characteristic phase in Germany nowadays: it is now time to put positive experiences of inclusion into laws and on a real and wider scale of practice.

Several evaluations and research reports concerned with the question of whether inclusion is possible in mainstream schools, produced mostly positive results. Pupils with SEN achieved the same or even better results in mainstream schools than pupils in special schools. Disabled and non-disabled pupils profit from each other, especially in the field of social behaviour, responsibility, independence and self-confidence. The recent approach is that a special school is not the only place to ensure that special educational needs are adequately met. Furthermore, it can be expected that some of the *Länder* will change their school law in the direction of more inclusive education: it is felt that pupils should stay together from the beginning of their school career, including pupils with problems in speech, behaviour, learning and so on.

The Act against discrimination of people with handicaps was implemented in 1996 in the basic law, *Grundgesetz*, of Germany. The vicissitude in the conception of disabilities was herein visible: from a nation that treats people with welfare to a community which appoints participation in social life. Parents considered special institutions increasingly as a discrimination against their children. Discrimination is a given fact, when a pupil has to attend a special school even when he or she could be sent to a mainstream school appropriate to his or her age, where his or her special educational needs can be accommodated and given special support. This was an adjudication by the Federal Constitutional Court, the *Bundesverfassungsgericht*, from October 1997. Mainstreaming is nevertheless restricted to budgetary funds. Parents' wish for mainstream education must be frustrated by the administration when personnel, rooms and auxiliary means could not be

obtained. The number of pupils with SEN in mainstream classes is substantially restricted by the amount of money spent for education of pupils with and without disabilities.

Definitions of SEN/disability

The current definition of SEN means specific support for disabled pupils. Germany uses the term '*sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf*'. This term, which is congruent with the term 'SEN', is defined by the recommendation of the KMK in 1994 as 'the improvement of care and support for children and adults who are disabled or reduced in their possibilities in education, development and training'. The area of special needs education with respect to all organisational aspects refers to the special needs within the context of disability exclusively.

Pupils experiencing problems as a result of certain handicaps and/or in need of additional educational support because of problematic situations as well as pupils with temporary learning difficulties (e.g. slow learners, dyslexia, ADHD) are supported by a combination of measures of differentiation within the structure of the general system of support and facilitation. Remedial or individual educational programmes based on the general structure, offer and give support for problem situations during the learning process. The Federal Republic of Germany has a comprehensive framework of special measures targeted to give additional advice and support for all kinds of situations that might occur in daily school life.

Special education is classified into the following categories with regard to special educational requirements and belongs to the *Förderschwerpunkt* (key issue of SEN support):

| Categories | 'Förderschwerpunkt' |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Blind | Vision |
| Visually impaired | Vision |
| Deaf | Hearing |
| Hearing impaired | Hearing |
| Intellectually disabled | Mental Development |
| Physically disabled | Physical and Motor |


| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| | Development |
| Pupils with learning difficulties | Learning |
| Pupils with behavioural problems | Emotion and Social Development |
| Pupils with impaired speech | Speech |
| Pupils undergoing prolonged hospitalisation | Chronic sickness |
| | Since 2000: autistic behaviour |

In practice, there are many problems with these categories, mainly because a lot of disabled pupils cannot be unquestionably classified and an increasing number of pupils are multiply disabled. The development into '*Förderschwerpunkte*' makes it possible for teacher to use them as a guideline for special support.

Assessment

The assessment of SEN is based on multi-disciplinary reports. The special school, or in some *Länder* the support or resource centres, are responsible for the reporting of SEN. If an institution makes an application for assessment, the parents of the child have to be informed and consulted. Parents can also make an application themselves and can object to a placement decision.

Education of pupils with SEN is more and more accepted as a common task for all types of schools. This means a changing attitude towards disabled pupils, the way these pupils should be educated and a changing view of educational assessment and diagnosis. To give appropriate support to a pupil with SEN, not only the pupil's intellectual and behavioural deficits should be assessed, but also the pupil's abilities, their developmental stage and relations with their educational and social environment. The *Länder* within Germany have discussed this changing of diagnostic criteria. The Recommendation passed by the KMK in 1994 clarifies the necessity of overcoming traditional categories of pupils with disabilities in favour of more differentiated approaches of support and individual



development. Eight diagnosis key-elements for pupils with SEN were set up: motor, perception, cognition, motivation, communication, interaction, emotion and creativity.

The diagnosis of SEN contains a description of the individual SEN, the decision about the process of education and the place of support. To ensure appropriate support measures, it is necessary to get a qualitative and a quantitative profile that contains information concerning the development of learning and behavioural strategies, perceptual abilities, social relationships, the ability to communicate and interact, individual and educational circumstances in life, the school environment and possibilities for change, as well as the vocational environment.

The decision as to the place of support has to consider the adequate form of organisation which, in the best possible manner, enables methodical-didactic and therapeutic measures appropriate to the particular disability, corresponds to the socio-emotional needs of the pupils, stimulates self-identification and personality development and prepares the pupil for the acceptance of social and professional challenges.

Provision for pupils with SEN

Since 1975, an increasing number of disabled pupils have been included in mainstream schools through different pilot projects. Various forms of co-operation between mainstream and special schools have emerged and approaches to inclusive teaching have been developed in educational science. A focus on institutions has been replaced by a focus on the needs of the individual.

Special education support consists of the following forms of organisation:

- *Special educational support through preventive measures*
Pupils facing the threat of disability receive preventive assistance to help counteract the emergence of the disability.



- *Special educational support in joint education/lessons*

Education with special support can be organised in mainstream schools in co-operation or with assistance and practical support of a special teacher, other professionals, or in some cases a social worker. Special support is provided inside the classroom, during class lessons, or outside the classroom, part-time or full-time depending on the individual, organisational and institutional situation.

- *Special educational support in special schools*

Pupils whose special educational needs cannot be sufficiently met by the facilities within a mainstream school with support of the mobile special pedagogical service receive instruction in special schools. Special schools plan and guarantee individual support and education adapted to the pupil's needs.

There are ten types of special schools and institutions (1998):

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Visually impaired and blind pupils | 54 |
| Hearing impaired and deaf pupils | 96 |
| Intellectually disabled pupils | 747 |
| Physically disabled pupils | 170 |
| Pupils with learning difficulties | 1,651 |
| Pupils with behavioural problems | 369 |
| Pupils with impaired speech | 318 |
| Sick pupils | 163 |
| Other | 292 |
| Total | 3,961 |

The 'other' category consists of institutions that teach pupils who cannot be assigned to individual disability categories. Some special schools frequently work as all-day schools or boarding schools. Since 1986, the number of special schools (and institutions) has grown from almost 3,000 to almost 4,000 in 1996 (due to the unification of the five new *BundesLänder* in 1990).



- *Special educational support in co-operative forms*

Many special schools and mainstream schools are in the process of developing close pedagogical co-operation. They offer opportunities for joint activities between disabled and non-disabled pupils. Co-operation may enrich school lessons and school life for all participants and expands the opportunities for changing between school types and educational courses.

- *Special needs education with special units*

The aim of special education units, either as regional or supra-regional institutions, is to meet individual needs or a range of different needs and to guarantee special needs education in preventive, inclusive and co-operative forms. This form of education is organised as near to the home as possible and provided by specialists.

- *Special educational support within the framework of special pedagogical support centres*

In Germany, several *Länder* make the resource of special pedagogical knowhow of special schools available by developing these schools into support or resource centres. The main task of these '*Förderzentren*' is the further development of professionalism and organisation. The centres work as regional or supra-regional institutions with one or several key-points of support, and ensure support in a preventive, inclusive, institutional or co-operative form. Between the *Länder*, there are differences in conceptions and aims of the centres. The centres are in charge of the diagnostic process, organise courses for pupils with SEN, give advice to and co-operate with teachers, offer basic information, provide training and develop necessary aids and teaching materials.

- *Special needs education in the vocational training sector and during the transition to work environment*

Young people with SEN should be given the opportunity to receive vocational training, or have to be supported in being



included in a working environment that match the individual capabilities and skills.

- *Special educational support in small special classes*

These classes are organised for the educational support of pupils exhibiting temporary problems. Special educators take care of these learning groups. Some of these classes are tied to primary or secondary schools. Examples of these classes are observation classes, classes for diagnosis and promotion and classes for pupils with reading and writing disabilities.



3.9 Greece

Inclusion policy


In Greece, the special education field is an integral and organic part of general education. The current legislation promotes the inclusion of pupils with SEN into the mainstream school system. It provides for the establishment of special classes operating in mainstream schools and staffed with specialist teachers who administer individualised educational programmes to pupils with learning difficulties and behavioural problems.

Currently, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs is in the process of drafting a Bill aimed at defining the legislative framework for Special Education and to include pupils with SEN into general, vocational and technical education. Under this Bill, measures are taken and services provided at all levels of education. The measures include the development and implementation of special programmes and teaching methods, as well as improvement in availability of special materials, instruments and other equipment. The services that are provided include diagnosis, assessment, pedagogical and psychological support, physiotherapy, ergotherapy, speech therapy, advising parents, social work, taking advantage of pupils' free time, transportation and travel and any other service that fosters equal treatment for people with SEN.

The special classes and groups are renamed as inclusion groups, clearly expressing the fact that the main purpose is to support pupils with SEN to become fully included into mainstream classes by planning and implementing individualised programmes that include long-term and short-term goals.

The Pedagogical Institute is in the process of planning pilot projects in order to improve inclusive education to a large extent throughout the country.

The Special Education Directorate proposed new measures which are contained in the new law on special education. Among others, the following interventions are proposed:

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1. The inclusion of pupils with SEN into nursery schools from the age of three and the provision of facilities in order to keep these pupils in school after school hours for sport and the development of individual skills.
 2. The organisation of pre-vocational workshops in addition to education in special schools in order to give pupils an opportunity to develop and cultivate other skills in addition to theoretical knowledge and the creation of technical vocational schools for pupils with SEN.
 3. Diagnostic and assessment centres will provide further assistance to pupils with SEN and their families and provide support for their class teacher as well.
 4. The development of educational provision and training for autistic pupils, pupils with visual and hearing impairments, pupils with multiple disabilities, pupils in hospitals and pupils in rehabilitation centres.
 5. The support of individualised teaching for pupils with SEN in mainstream schools.

Definitions of SEN/disability

According to the law, pupils with SEN are regarded as those who have particular difficulties in learning or in adapting to the environment, because of physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional or social impairments. Under the new law, the diagnostic process is assigned to the Centres for Diagnosis, Assessment and Consultative Support (the 'KDAY' centres). The purpose of these centres is to offer services in diagnosing, assessing and supporting all pupils and in particular pupils with SEN, by promoting and supporting their inclusion into mainstream schools. Another task is to support, inform, train and raise awareness among teachers, parents and society in general.



Provision for pupils with SEN

In Greece, there are about 200 special schools. In 1996/97, the number of special nursery schools was 37 and the number of special primary schools 138. In secondary education there were 11 special schools for general secondary education and four special technical vocational schools. In 1996/97, there were also 660 special classes throughout the country.

Inclusion is provided through inclusion groups which are found in mainstream schools and also through inclusive education addressing pupils with SEN, either individually or in small groups. The assistance provided to a pupil with SEN, the extent and type of adaptations of the mainstream educational programme depend on the pupil's educational as well as other needs. This is implemented through a specific educational programme. This compensatory programme covers either the entire programme or certain courses of full-time or part-time study. Inclusion can also be organised in special schools that share a building with a mainstream school, so the schools can organise common internal or external educational programmes as well as excursions and cultural activities.



3.10 Iceland

Inclusion policy


For all levels of education (i.e. from pre-school through to upper secondary school) the Education Acts state that pupils with disabilities and/or SEN are to attend the same schools as pupils without disabilities and/or SEN.

The law on compulsory education does not mention the concept of special education. However, it does stipulate the right of every pupil: it emphasises equivalent access to education for all children and young persons regardless of sex, geographical location or disability. The act states that education must provide knowledge and skills (in partnership with the home environment) and promote the balanced development of pupils into responsible individuals in a democratic society.

The Acts are supplemented by a number of regulations that give further details on how the Acts are to be put into practice. Among those are regulations on special needs education and the National Curriculum. The latest revision of the National Curriculum for pre-school, compulsory school (primary school and lower secondary) and upper secondary schools was published and put into practice in the school year 1999/2000. The main issue in it is the connection and continuity between the different levels of education.

Pupils with SEN at upper secondary level are to be provided with instruction and training according to their needs and to be given special support in their studies. Where possible, they are to be included in mainstream education and do, for the most part, attend a mainstream class and follow the same subjects as other pupils, but with special assistance. In various upper secondary schools this instruction is organised in special classes or units within a mainstream school. In the year 2000 there was a new curriculum published for pupils with special needs in upper secondary education.

The state and the local authorities have the responsibility for education in Iceland; the local authority for pre-school and the



compulsory school and the state for upper secondary education.

The municipal authorities are responsible for the allocation of funds to their schools according to the law on compulsory education. This includes paying for instruction, i.e. general teaching, administration and specialists' services, substitute teaching, special needs education and the teaching of pupils in hospitals, as well as establishing and running schools at the compulsory level. The municipal authorities are elected for four-year terms and formally decide on the allocation of funds for teaching in public primary schools. The municipality can delegate the power of decision to the officials in the local school office. This arrangement is most common in the largest urban areas.

The municipalities are of different sizes and have varying possibilities for obtaining income; the more rural municipalities can therefore receive allocations from the Municipalities Equalisation Fund. Reykjavik, the capital city, is by far the largest municipality in Iceland and receives no allocation from the Municipalities Equalisation Fund because of the advantage of its size. In accordance with the regulations on the Municipalities Equalisation Fund, the municipalities are allocated funds according to set rules.

Definitions of SEN/disability

Since there is no mention of special education in the school Acts, it can be concluded that SEN do not exist. This is not the case as can be seen in the general objectives of the law that all pupils should receive education according to his/her needs and as far as possible provided in the same environment as all the other pupils. At the same time it is recognised that some pupils have a need to a change in school environment for a shorter or longer period of time and may therefore be better off in a special class or a special school.

Medical diagnoses can contribute to the work done in the schools. As an example pupils and youngsters that are deaf and hearing impaired can be mentioned. In pre-school there is



a special class for sign language users as well as a special school at the compulsory stage. In upper secondary school, a certain grammar school has a special educational facility for deaf pupils. A Communication Centre for the deaf and hearing impaired has the responsibility for providing sign language interpreters in upper secondary schools.

Within the regulation on special needs education for compulsory schools (1996), special needs education is defined as teaching that is significantly different in objectives, content, teaching situation and/or methods from the teaching that other pupils of the same age are offered. Special needs education is planned for a longer or shorter period according to the pupil's needs, as needed for the whole time the pupil goes to school. Special education can take place within or outside the mainstream classroom, in a special class or in a special school.

Special education means among other things:

1. the writing of an education plan for an individual or a group of individuals; the plan is based on information and observation of the pupil's whole situation and the assessment of the pupil's schoolwork and intellectual and physical development; both long-term and short-term plans for the pupil's education are to be made;
2. implementation according to the plan;
3. written reports and evaluation of the education plan and the teaching of it.

Special needs education is not seen as a separate facility from other teaching – special education is one way of teaching pupils/young people and can be interpreted within a continuum.

Assessment

The rule is that a pupil in compulsory school is supposed to attend his/her home school. In the case of a disability in the classical sense and/or special educational need for some other reason, special assistance should be provided.

The referral can be made by the class teacher, the parents, the school health service or by the pupil himself or herself in the



older age classes. The case is then presented in pupils' protective council, which makes a proposal of what is to be done. It may be the schools' specialist service that does the necessary testing or information is gathered from other specialist services. A recommendation is then made to the head teacher who, in co-operation with parents, makes the decision about an appropriate educational setting. This setting may need extra resources, which the head teacher must apply for to the school service in the local authority.

If the placement is not in the pupil's home school there has to be an agreement between the parent, the school personnel and the school advisory service that a placement in another school serves the pupil's needs best in a given situation. The argument for special needs education must be strong to overrule the parents' opinion, if they object to the suggested provision. Although the laws and regulations expect experts and parents to agree upon the placement of individual pupils, the right of the parent has been shown to be the strongest element in the case of disagreement.

However at the upper secondary level the decision of the placement of individual pupils is in the hands of the head teacher. The distribution of pupils with SEN is supposed to be even between the schools to give pupils the opportunity to be included in all types of upper secondary schools.

In the last few years there has been a significant change in upper secondary education where pupils with disabilities are now offered four year education in upper secondary schools, and for the last two years there has been increased emphasis on work support in co-operation between the educational system and the labour market.

Provision for pupils with SEN

Special education is arranged in different ways:

1. with special assistance within his/her mainstream class in his/her home school; the pupil remains in his/her class in his/her home school with extra resources organised in the



form of extra teaching in different subjects, reading, mathematics or in the form of assistance in activities for daily life;

2. with exchange hours within the class. the pupil receives special needs education in the same subjects as the other pupils, but in a different way within the classroom;
3. with individual instruction outside his/her mainstream class or in special groups (part time or full time); the pupil is part time in his/her home class and part time in a special class;
4. in a special class within a mainstream school or in a special school; the pupil can also be moved to another mainstream school in the same community; the pupil is in a special class within the mainstream school or in a special school;
5. elsewhere if that is the most appropriate provision, at home or in an institution.

A pupil has the right to special needs education if the parents, teachers and the schools' specialist team agree that a certain special needs education provision is appropriate at any given time. The head teacher is expected to initiate the provision in co-operation with the parents. If there is a disagreement about the provision the case is referred to the local authority for decision.

Special classes exist for pupils with autism, visual disability, hearing impairment and temporary classes for pupils with mild learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties.



3.11 Ireland

Inclusion policy

In the 1995 White Paper on Education, the government affirmed that its objective would be: to ensure a continuum of provision for SEN, ranging from occasional help in the mainstream school to full-time education in a special school or unit, with pupils being enabled to move as necessary and practical from one type of provision to another.


Current government policy is to encourage the maximum possible level of inclusion of pupils with special needs into mainstream schools and to put into place the necessary special supports to facilitate this development. It is envisaged that this support would be provided by the appointment of additional resource and learning support teachers in mainstream schools and by the expansion of the visiting (or peripatetic) teacher service.

In November 1998, the Minister for Education and Science announced a substantial increase in funding for special educational provision in mainstream primary schools. Pupils with learning disabilities in mainstream primary schools now have automatic entitlement to the services of a resource teacher and/or special needs assistants on a full-time or part-time basis, in accordance with their assessed needs.

Since 1999, there has been a very substantial increase in the number of resource teachers in mainstream primary schools. There are now more than 1,550 full-time resource teachers working with pupils with assessed learning disabilities in these schools, providing a service for an estimated 12,000–15,000 pupils.

The Education Act of 1998

In the preamble to the Act, there is specific reference to provision for the education of persons with disabilities or SEN. A stated objective of the Act is ‘to give practical effect to the constitutional rights of pupils, including pupils who have a disability or other special educational need’. The Act states that




the Minister for Education and Science has a function to ensure that support services and a level and quality of education appropriate to their needs and abilities are made available to persons with disabilities or other SEN. The support services which the Minister can provide for schools and for pupils with SEN and their parents include assessment; psychological, guidance and counselling services; technical aid and equipment; adaptations to buildings to facilitate access and transport; speech and language therapy; early childhood education and continuing education; transport.

Schools are required to use their resources to ensure that the educational needs of pupils with disabilities or other SEN are identified and provided for. Boards of Management of schools are required to use the resources provided to make reasonable provision and accommodation for pupils with disabilities or other SEN.

Boards of Management are also required to publish the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation by pupils with disabilities or other SEN. The School Plan will state the measures the school proposes to achieve equality of access and participation in the school by pupils with disabilities or other SEN.

Under the Act, the Minister is empowered to make regulations relating to access to schools and centres for education for pupils with disabilities or other special educational need.

The National Council for Special Education will be established shortly by the Minister for Education and Science, under the terms of the Act. The Council will have two broad functions. It will be responsible for the provision of a range of educational services at local and national level for pupils with SEN. In particular, it will have the capacity to co-ordinate special needs education provision at local level and arrange for the delivery of agreed educational services. This will be achieved through the employment of a network of Special Needs Organisers who will act as a single point of contact for the parent of a special needs child with the clear and specific objective of delivering for that child those educational services to which s/he is entitled.



The National Council will also be responsible for the carrying out of research and the provision of expert advice to the Department of Education and Science in relation to special education issues.

A new Bill concerning pupils with SEN is in preparation and a comprehensive and detailed process of consultation with all involved and interested parties is currently taking place. It is expected that the Bill will be published by the end of 2002 and that it will be introduced in the Dail (the National Parliament) in early 2003.

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) was established in September 1999 as an executive agency of the Department of Education and Science. NEPS provides psychological services in both primary and post-primary schools and in related education centres funded by the DES. NEPS is currently developing a national service over a five-year period and eventually plans to employ 200 psychologists.

Definitions of SEN/disability

Pupils with SEN are defined as 'those whose disabilities and/or circumstances prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education which is normally provided for pupils of the same age' (Report of Special Education Review Committee, 1993).

Special education is defined as 'any educational provision which is designed to cater for pupils with SEN and is additional to or different from the provision which is generally made for pupils of the same age'. Educational inclusion is defined as 'the participation of pupils with disabilities in school activities with other pupils, to the maximum extent, which is consistent with the broader overall interests of both the pupils with disabilities and the other pupils in the class/group'.

Special education provision is made in special schools/units/classes for the following groups/categories: young offenders, children at risk, pupils with emotional/ behavioural difficulties, pupils with physical disabilities, hearing impaired



pupils, visually impaired pupils, children of travellers, multiply disabled pupils, pupils with specific learning disabilities, pupils with specific language disorders, pupils with autism, pupils with mild learning disabilities, pupils with moderate learning disabilities, severely emotionally disturbed pupils, pupils with severe/profound learning disabilities.

Pupils with learning disabilities are categorised as follows:


| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Borderline mild learning disability | IQ range 71–80 |
| Mild learning disability | IQ range 50–70 |
| Moderate learning disability | IQ range 35–49 |
| Severe learning disability | IQ range 20–34 |
| Profound learning disability | IQ < 20 |

Assessment

Regional Health Boards have responsibility for the delivery and co-ordination of assessment, advisory and support services for pre-school pupils with disabilities. These services are provided directly by the Health Boards or by grant-aided voluntary organisations.

Psychologists attached to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) carry out psychological assessments of pupils with special needs as part of their duties. In some instances, psychologists employed by non-statutory voluntary agencies conduct psychological assessments in the primary years. These agencies are generally associated with or attached to centres or special schools for pupils with significant learning disabilities. Psychologists employed by Health Boards also conduct psychological assessments.

Pupils are referred to special needs education services, in either special or mainstream schools, on the basis of a psychological assessment and recommendation. Pupils in need of learning support, a service that is designed to ensure that all pupils achieve basic literacy and numeracy before they complete their primary education, are not required to undergo psychological assessment to have access to additional specialist tuition by a learning support teacher. This is a school



decision, normally based on the results of standardised tests in reading and mathematics.

Enrolment of pupils in special schools, in special classes and in resource services is the responsibility of boards of management of schools. This responsibility is usually delegated to principal teachers or to admissions committees.

No pupil can be admitted to a special school, special class or resource service without a referral from a psychologist.

Provision for pupils with SEN

In the table below the categories of special schools and the number of special schools in each category are presented.

| | <i>Schools</i> |
|---|----------------|
| For pupils with mild learning disabilities | 30 |
| For pupils with moderate learning disabilities | 33 |
| Residential schools for young offenders | 10 |
| For emotionally disturbed pupils | 6 |
| Hospital schools for physically disabled pupils | 6 |
| For physically disabled pupils | 6 |
| For hearing impaired pupils | 3 |
| For children of travelling families | 4 |
| For visually impaired pupils | 2 |
| For pupils with a specific learning disability | 4 |
| For severely emotionally disturbed pupils | 1 |
| For pupils with severe/profound learning disabilities | 5 |
| For pupils with autistic spectrum disorder | 17 |
| For young offenders | 10 |
| For out of control pupils | 3 |
| Total | 140 |


In addition, special classes are quite common in Ireland. In the table below the categories and numbers of special classes are given.



| <i>In first level schools:</i> | <i>Special classes</i> |
|---|------------------------|
| For pupils with mild learning disabilities | 294 |
| For pupils with moderate learning disabilities | 17 |
| For pupils with severe/profound learning disabilities | 5 |
| For pupils with specific learning disability | 16 |
| For pupils with specific language disorder | 43 |
| For pupils with emotional/behavioural disturbance | 3 |
| For pupils with autistic spectrum disorder | 33 |
| For pupils with hearing impairment | 11 |
| For pupils with physical disability | 2 |
| Multiple disability | 2 |
| Severe emotional disturbance | 2 |
| Special classes for travellers | 456 |
| Total | 884 |

It is further estimated that about 1,000 pupils with SEN are educated in special classes in post-primary schools.

In Ireland there are about 1900 learning support teachers (1,530 in first level schools, 370 in second-level schools), 1,700 resource teachers (1,550 in first level and 150 in second-level schools). Furthermore 80 peripatetic teachers support visually impaired and hearing impaired pupils, some pupils with learning disabilities, including pupils with Down's syndrome and pupils of travelling families in both first-level and second-level schools.



3.12 Italy

Inclusion policy

Italy is boosting an advanced regulatory framework regarding the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in mainstream classes. Pupils have been enrolled in mainstream schools for more than 25 years thanks to a series of well-designed legislative and administrative measures which have guaranteed full inclusion of pupils notwithstanding the kind of impairment or age.

The right to education in the 'school for all', is ruled by the Italian Constitution (article 3) and was first enacted by the Law 517/1977 which abolished differentiated classes, after a short period of experimentation led by the Falucci's Commission based on the Law 118, 1971 (art. 28) which aimed at favouring the inclusion of disabled, impaired pupils in mainstream classes. The main legislative reference in terms of school inclusion is the Framework Law on the handicap (n.104/92) which has been reinforced by the presidential decree dated February 1994, which enacted co-operation among schools, local health units and family for the preparation of the IEP (Individual Educational Plan). This last provision known as 'Atto d'indirizzo' is the legislative measure and the milestone of inclusion which all teachers should know since they are called to build up an alternative route for the pupil with disability independently from their disciplinary domain.

For pupils with disabilities the law provides for a diversified Individual Education Plan (IEP) according to those educational goals which are not based on ministerial programmes (i.e. the Italian version of the British national curriculum system) but are geared to meet disabled pupil's capabilities, skills and potentialities. Sometimes the IEP is erroneously considered as an individualised programme. On the contrary there is a difference between individualised programming and the IEP. While the former is a document prepared by curricular teachers in terms of syllabus content, the latter is a more complex document intended as a global planning for the disabled pupil including didactic, rehabilitative, social and welfare aspects.



The inclusion school model envisages the following steps:


The case is reported Parents submit their child's medical diagnosis or the school may notice a pupil's disability and report it to specialists. However, parental authorisation is always required.

Functional diagnosis It concerns the description of the pupil's pathology, disability, capability and skills. It is an acquisition of clinical and psychological data provided by the multidisciplinary unit (medical specialist, child psychologist, rehabilitation therapist, social practitioner at the local health authority) regarding the psycho-physical conditions of the pupil. It contains personal details of the pupil, his/her family, aetiological factors, medical case history and the pupil's potentialities according to the following axis: cognitive, emotional-relational, linguistic, sensorial, motor, neuropsychological and personal autonomy.

Functional Dynamic Profile This consists of an analytic description, based on the functional diagnosis, of the pupil's potential levels of response to present/possible development. It indicates the pupil's physical, psychological, social and emotional characteristics, his/her disability related learning difficulties and chances of recovery. The pupil's cultural and personal choices must be taken into consideration. It is prepared jointly by the multidisciplinary unit composed of curricular teachers, parents, the specialist teacher, social and health care practitioners such as the psychologist, the rehabilitation therapist and the medical specialist.

It is dynamic because it must be modified at regular intervals on the basis of a structured observation and according to pupil's outcomes especially when moving from infant to primary and to secondary education. It envisages the analysis of the following aspects: cognitive, emotional-relational, communication, linguistic, sensory, motor, neuropsychological, autonomy and learning. It envisages long-, middle- and short-term objectives. The school principal is responsible for the DFP.

Individual Educational Plan It represents the official document of the pupil's inclusion in mainstreaming. It is here that class



teachers, along with specialist teachers, are to design an educational plan tailored to the pupil's abilities and needs. It includes educational, rehabilitative, social and health provisions. The idea is to offer the pupil diversified and easier learning conditions along with additional extracurricular activities to favour the transition to work and adult life and alternating school with vocational training.


The most important aspect to take into consideration when the GLH (the professional team in charge of the preparation of the IEP) is designing the plan is to provide for life skills that may favour the social inclusion of the pupil. (Note: GLH (*Gruppo di lavoro sull'handicap*) co-operates with the GLIP (*Gruppo di lavoro interistituzionale provinciale*) which works on a local basis rather than a school basis.)

Evaluation and monitoring In order to check if interventions and provisions are matching with the outcomes and if goals have been achieved. This phase is crucial in order to provide for changes and favour cognitive and social development of the pupil.

If the class council finds that the pupil has achieved learning levels that meet or are comparable with the goals set by the ministerial programmes, the pupil is to be evaluated by the same system applicable to other pupils. On the other hand, the class council requires to grade the pupil's learning performance following the aims set in the Individual Educational Plan and issues a certification of attendance rather than a school diploma to access a higher grade. The disabled pupil is also allowed to proceed into vocational training, part of which he/she might have already attended after/during secondary school.

The Ministry of Public Education provides:

- the organisation of educational activities with flexibility in the setting of the classes in order to implement the school programme;
- guaranteed continuity in education between school levels. This requires close collaboration between teachers at different levels.



Inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream units and classes of every kind and level of education means cutting down the number of pupils of that unit or class. The present law envisages no more than 25 pupils for each class with one disabled pupil or two mild disabled pupils (Ministry Decree 331/98 recently modified by Decree 141/99) For placement in mainstream classes, the psycho-physical development of the pupils is more important than his or her age. Pupils are given the opportunity to follow the standard curriculum or a simplified curriculum according to their abilities. Special curricula based on pupils' individual abilities are fostered.

A group of experts in school inclusion advises the Provincial Director of Education and each school. They collaborate with local authorities and with the local health authority in drawing up a plan to implement individual education programmes and other activities concerning inclusion of pupils with SEN.

Definitions of SEN/disability

A person is called 'disabled' when her/his physical, psychological or sensory disability is steady or progressive, when it causes difficulties in learning, relationships or inclusion into working life and when it is serious enough to give rise to social disadvantage or social exclusion. A single or multiple disability is considered as serious when, taking into account the age of the person, it diminishes personal autonomy, thus requiring the provision of permanent assistance.

Assessment

The Local Health Authority has the task of evaluating, through special medical commissions, the disability and general ability of the pupil as well as the need for permanent assistance. The commissions include a social worker and an expert on the particular kind of disability, both of them employed by the Local Health Authorities.



Provision for pupils with SEN

In the age range from birth to three, pupils with SEN are guaranteed a place in nursery schools; from three to six they are guaranteed a place in kindergartens, and from six to 14 (the compulsory age range), pupils with SEN are guaranteed a place and education in mainstream classes. Pupils with SEN who have completed compulsory education are guaranteed admission into mainstream classes of post-compulsory secondary schools and when they have completed this they are guaranteed access to higher education: universities and other institutions of higher education.

Educational inclusion focuses upon the development of the pupil's potential in learning, communication, building relationships and socialising. Pupils with difficulties in learning and difficulties related to their disability have the right to study, just like all other pupils.

Pupils with SEN, who are temporarily unable to go to school for health reasons are also guaranteed education. The provincial Director of Education arranges mainstream classes for these pupils in hospitals, as detached units of state schools.

School inclusion of pupils with SEN into mainstream units and classes of any kind and level of education is achieved through a co-ordinated plan of school services, health and social assistance, cultural, recreation and sport centres as well as through activities managed by public or private bodies.

Technical equipment and educational instruments are supplied to schools and universities.

In the different levels of compulsory education, one support teacher is provided for every four disabled pupils. However, this ratio can be changed in primary schools when there are pupils with particularly serious disabilities on the basis of their functional diagnosis, or when schools are situated in the mountains, or on little islands.



Although full inclusion of pupils with SEN is the current policy, there are still schools for the blind and schools for the deaf and speech impaired. Blind and deaf and speech-impaired pupils can complete their compulsory education in mainstream schools as well as in special schools. Furthermore, there are schools with particular goals for the special education of disabled minors and minors with difficulties.



3.13 Luxembourg

Inclusion policy

In Luxembourg the management of schools is centralised. The essential decisions are made at a national level:

- Laws and orders are prepared in the Ministry of Education.
- National curricula, school books, time schedules and the organisation of school holidays are worked out by working groups and confirmed and published under the authority of the Minister of Education.
- The budget and management of post-primary schools are the responsibility of the Minister of Education.
- The budget and management of early, pre-primary and primary schools are the responsibility of the local authorities (communal council) under the supervision of school inspectors.

Compulsory school goes from the age of four to 15 years: two years of pre-primary schooling (*classes préscolaires*), six years of primary schooling (*école primaire*) and three years of post-primary schooling (*enseignement postprimaire*). Early education (*éducation précoce*) is organised in most of the communes of the country for children of three years. It is not yet compulsory, but may become compulsory, if the necessary structures are developed everywhere.

Since 1973 (law of 1973), pupils with intellectual, physical, perceptual and severe behavioural disabilities are admitted in special schools. They can be considered either as regional centres or specific institutes. As a result of the law of 28 June 1994 a major change occurred. The law was modified as follows: Pupils with SEN could now be admitted in special schools or in mainstream schools. When pupils are included in mainstream schools, they can now rely upon support given by an external resource service.

Pupils with special needs therefore have the possibility to get education from a special centre or the mainstream school



system, with or without support given by the special national resource service (SREA). The law of 1994 allows parents to decide between two main possibilities for their child with special needs:

- special school;
- inclusion in mainstream schools.

The parents' will has to be respected by professionals. More and more parents opt for the inclusion of their child with SEN in the mainstream school and ask for a specific support in the compulsory school system.

The budget of the national resource service (SREA) has actually reached a sufficient level. Ongoing discussions on the organisation of inclusive schooling show the divergence in concepts and aims of the national school system.


Definitions of SEN/disability and assessment

The law distinguishes between motor, intellectual, perceptive, behavioural and speech disabilities. The diagnosis of the pupil's school problems is the responsibility of a team, composed of a medical practitioner, a pedagogue a psychologist and a social assistant. A local or regional commission (*commission médico-psycho-pédagogique locale ou régionale*) under the chairmanship of the school advisor decides on a proposal to the parents about the school career of their child. Parents may accept or refuse this proposal. A lot of intermediate solutions may be suggested: special school with inclusion for a few hours a week, mainstream school with admission for several activities in a special class or school, part-time inclusion in mainstream schools with private sequences of therapy etc.

A national commission decides on the admission of pupils to special schools or in all situations where no consensus with the parents could be found in the local or regional commission.

Provision for pupils with SEN

The law of 1973 promoted the creation of specialist centres, depending upon the Department of Special Needs Education



(*Education différenciée*). In 1994 the Minister of Education encouraged inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream schooling (Law 1994) and the Service Ré-Educatif Ambulatoire (SREA) was created to allow the support of pupils with SEN in mainstream classes.

If parents want inclusive education for their child, they have to ask for it in the different services. Finally each pupil with SEN is addressed to the resource centre, where a report about special needs is sent to the local or regional commission, which has to agree with the proposal in the report.

A pupil can benefit from a maximum of 8–10 hours' support a week, given by a professional of the SREA. Together with the class teacher the professional elaborates an Individual Educational Plan for the pupil. At the beginning of the school year this plan is presented by the professional of the SREA and the teacher to the parents for agreement. At the end of the school year a meeting where the plan is evaluated is held between all the concerned persons (professionals and parents). New interventions can be generated but have to be agreed by the commission. This model is functioning in the whole country. All the support is given by the professionals of the SREA according to the same model: request of the parents – report of the SREA about the pupil's needs – commission – decision of parents – support in the classroom – individual plan – meetings with all the concerned persons – continuation of the support if needed.

Admission in one of the 18 special schools is the other alternative. These special schools can be divided, according to their specific specialisation, into different categories:

- visual impairment (Institut pour Déficients Visuels)
- motor (brain damage) (Institut pour Infirmes Moteurs Cérébraux)
- speech impairment (Centre de Logopédie)
- behavioural troubles (Centre d'Observation, Centre d'Intégration Scolaire)
- autism (Institut pour Enfants Autistiques et Psychotiques)
- learning difficulty (centres d'Education Différenciée).



3.14 The Netherlands


Inclusion policy

In the Netherlands, special needs education was originally regulated through special legislation under the Primary Education Act of 1920. In 1967, the Special Education Decree was issued, which specified regulations for schools for special education. In 1985, this Decree was replaced by the Interim Act for Special Education and Secondary Special Education (ISOVSO). In August 1998 new laws on Primary Education (WPO: Wet op het Primair Onderwijs) and on Special Education (WEC: Wet op de Expertise Centra) came into force.

The educational system in the Netherlands consists of mainstream schools and special schools. Since the 1960s, Dutch special needs education has developed into a wide-ranging system for pupils who cannot keep up in mainstream schools. For a long time, this highly differentiated and extensive special needs education system was seen as an expression of the concern for pupils with SEN. Nowadays, a growing group of policy-makers, educators and parents think segregation in education has gone too far. A gradually increasing number of parents want their child with SEN to attend a mainstream school, so the child will receive as normal schooling as possible.

The first step towards inclusion was the Primary School Act of 1985. This Act stated that the major goal of primary schools is to offer appropriate instruction to all pupils aged from four to 12 and to guarantee all pupils an uninterrupted school career. Ideally, each pupil would receive the instruction that fits their unique educational needs. If primary schools were able to offer this so-called adaptive instruction, the number of pupils with SEN was expected to decrease more or less spontaneously. However, in the years after 1985, the expansion of special needs education did not stop.

In 1990 a new government policy document, 'Together to School Again' (the so-called WSNS policy), was intended to make a fresh start in including pupils with SEN. Under this




policy, all primary schools and the former special schools for pupils with learning difficulties have been grouped into regional clusters. Extra funding was available to set up these school clusters. The money is earmarked for extra staff with the specific task of offering help to pupils with SEN. As a result of this policy, mainstream and special schools began to work together; SEN co-ordinators were appointed in every mainstream school, training programmes were launched, new legislation passed, and regulations for new funding of the schools in the clusters were drawn up. The regulations for the two types of schools for pupils with learning difficulties are no longer part of special legislation, but fall under the new primary education law.

Each of the 250 school clusters will be funded equally, based on the total enrolment in primary education. About 50% of this amount will be transferred directly to existing special provisions and the other half will be allocated to the school cluster. This was implemented from 1998 onwards and in 2003 the new funding structure will be fully operational. By that time, regions will have to adapt their special needs education provision to the new funding structure. Some regions are closing down special schools – where there was a high degree of segregated provisions compared with other regions – while other areas receive additional funds.

The point is whether these two main resources will foster the government objective of including special and mainstream education. The setting up of school clusters will not directly result in a less segregated system: much more is needed. However, it must be said that without the necessary facilities (in terms of extra specialist help/time/attention) inclusion has little chance of succeeding. In this sense, introducing school clusters and a new funding structure can be regarded as necessary preconditions for inclusion.

In line with the WSNS policy also secondary special education for learning disabled and mildly mentally retarded pupils has changed. Special secondary education for those pupils is no longer part of special education legislation but has become part of the Secondary Education Act. This reform restructured



secondary special education and lower forms of mainstream secondary education into VMBO, Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs (pre-vocational secondary education). For pupils with special needs a support structure has been developed to help ensure that as many pupils as possible complete their chosen programmes and obtain VMBO qualifications. Pupils not expected to obtain a VMBO certificate even with considerable extra support can attend the 'practical training' programme. This form of education prepares pupils for low-skilled jobs in the labour market. The special needs support structure will be gradually phased in over a four-year period ending in August 2002.

For educating pupils with sensory, physical, and mental disabilities as well as/or behavioural problems a separate line of policy development has been developed. Until now, these pupils were only able to receive the services they needed after being admitted to a full-time special school. In 1996 the policy paper 'The Back-Pack' outlined plans to stop financing places for such pupils within special primary and secondary schools in favour of linking the funding of special services to the pupil involved, regardless of the type of schooling.

The idea is to change from supply-oriented funding to a system in which the means are forwarded to the person requiring the services: demand-oriented funding. The policy is known as the 'back-pack' policy: pupils take the funding with them to the school of their choice. An important characteristic of demand-oriented funding is that parents have an important say in choosing a school for their child. Means would be made available only after a positive decision by a body of experts. If a pupil met the criteria for a pupil-bound budget, parents and pupil could choose a school and decide with the school on how to use the funding.

Definitions of SEN/disability

The Dutch educational system comprises ten types of special education and so distinguishes ten types of pupil categories. However, directly linked to the new funding system in special


education is a reorganisation of special (including secondary) education. The different school types are being reorganised into four so-called expertise centres: those for the visually handicapped, those for pupils with communication disorders, those for physically and mentally handicapped; and those for pupils with behaviour problems. Currently (2001) the implementation of the regional expertise centres is in full swing.

| Expertise centres: | Comprising (former) special schools for: |
|---|---|
| For the visually handicapped | Blind and partially sighted |
| For pupils with communication disorders | Deaf, hearing impaired, severe speech disorders |
| For physically and mentally handicapped | Severe learning difficulties, Physically disabled, Chronically ill, Multiply disabled |
| For pupils with behaviour problems | Severely maladjusted, Pupils in paedological institutes |

Next to these categories are the pupils of the so-called 'special schools for elementary education' and of the provisions in secondary education. The provisions in secondary education cater for pupils with a backwardness of 1½–3 years, IQ above 75 and/or problems in social-emotional functioning. The special schools for elementary education – the 'old' schools for pupils with learning difficulties and educable intellectual disabilities – are an integral part of mainstream education legislation. Although special schools, they are no longer regarded as part of the special education system and nationally formulated definitions of their population are absent.

Assessment

Special needs education in the Netherlands is changing and that obviously affects assessment procedures. Currently two different assessment procedures can be distinguished: one for pupils in secondary special education for learning disabled and



mildly mentally retarded pupils and the other for the pupils with special needs referred to a regional expertise centre.

Pupils with learning disabilities and mild mental retardations in secondary education can be referred to an assessment committee. A regional referral committee decides on eligibility of pupils for special learning support or practical training. The committee uses centrally developed criteria to decide on placement. The criteria comprise IQ ranges (IQ above 75), learning backwardness (1½-3 years) and/or social-emotional problems.

Pupils with sensory, physical and mental impairments and/or severe behavioural problems are assessed by the admission boards of the special school concerned. There are no clearly defined criteria to decide on eligibility since special education law (WEC) simply states 'separate primary and secondary special education are intended for pupils for whom it has been established that a mainly orthopedagogical and orthodidactical approach is most appropriate' (Ministerie van OC&W, 1998). Generally the assessment consists of an examination of somatic/medical aspects, cognitive development, specific developmental aspects (language development, communication, concentration, motivation, etc.), social-emotional development (behaviour, emotional stability, independence etc.), as well as profiling the family situation, neighbourhood and/or cultural background. Pupils eligible for special education are not obliged to attend a special school, which depends ultimately on the parents' decision.

Currently newly developed assessment procedures and criteria are being tested. In the near future the task of the admission boards of the special schools will change. Their task will be to monitor pupils' progress and to support the class teacher. Each of the 40 regional expertise centres in the Netherlands will host an assessment committee in charge of deciding on eligibility for a pupil-bound budget for pupils with impairments. A nationally operating body will act as an inspectorate and evaluate the committees' decisions.


The eligibility criteria for a 'back-pack' are largely based on existing practice. Criteria for the visually impaired are a visual acuity: $\leq 0,3$ or a visual field: $\leq 30^\circ$ and limited participation in education as a result of the visual impairment. For hearing impaired pupils a hearing loss > 80 dB (or for hard of hearing pupils 35–80 dB) and limited participation in education are required. Criteria for pupils with speech and language problems are being developed and tested. The decision to provide for extra funding for mentally impaired pupils will be largely based on IQ (< 60), for physically impaired and chronically ill pupils medical data showing diagnosed disabilities/illness are needed. The criteria for behaviourally disturbed pupils require diagnosis in terms of the categories of the DSM-IV, problems at school, at home and/or in the community and a limited participation in education as a result of behaviour problems.

Provision for pupils with SEN

As pointed out before, currently the system for special needs education in the Netherlands consists of ten different types of special schools and various forms of special needs education in mainstream schools. The special schools are currently reorganised into Expertise Centres.

| Expertise centres: | Number: |
|---|---------|
| For the visually handicapped | 4 |
| For pupils with communication disorders | 5 |
| For physically and mentally handicapped | 19 |
| For pupils with behaviour problems | 14 |

Next to this special system for pupils with educational needs, the provisions in secondary education and the special schools for elementary education, there are also provisions in mainstream education that strive for or support mainstream inclusion of pupils with SEN. The main regulation used is visiting teacher supervision. Visiting (or ambulant) teacher supervision supports pupils who return from special needs education to a mainstream school and pupils who are eligible



for special needs education but have not been referred to the separate special school system. A special needs education teacher can offer the mainstream education teacher and the pupil the support necessary for an adequate education in a mainstream school. These facilities are used to an increasing extent.

About 8,600 pupils made use of the provision of visiting teaching in 2001. Research showed that peripatetic teaching can be a valuable instrument for improving the relationship between special and mainstream education. Moreover, most pupils receiving peripatetic teaching do perform according to expectations, or even better.

Next to visiting teaching supervision there are provisions for pupils with Down's syndrome and other pupils with mental impairments in mainstream education. Over the last decade the number of pupils included in mainstream education has grown from none to about 400. This growth is fully due to activities of parents' organisations. Parents want their children with Down's syndrome to attend mainstream schools. Although Dutch mainstream schools do not have to accept these pupils, an increasing number of mainstream schools accept the placement as a new challenge. The Dutch government has followed this development by providing extra support in mainstream education.



3.15 Norway


Inclusion policy

The Norwegian government determines the objectives and establishes the framework for education. A common national standard is ensured by means of legislation and a National Curriculum. Each county has a national educational office, which carries out central government functions and acts as a body of appeal for decisions concerning individual pupils. In recent years a considerable amount of responsibility has been transferred from central to local government. The municipalities are responsible for the running and the administration of primary and lower secondary schools and the counties for upper secondary schools.

Since 1975, there has been no specific legislation regarding the field of special education. The Act on Primary and Lower Secondary Education makes each municipality responsible for providing education for all pupils who are residents in the municipality regardless of their abilities. All pupils are registered at their local school and all have the right to receive instruction adapted to their individual abilities and aptitudes.

The municipalities may organise special needs education inside or outside the mainstream school, but the main principle in Norwegian school policy is that pupils with SEN are to be included in the mainstream school. Special needs education should be provided in accordance with the principles of inclusion, participation and decentralisation. The Education Act also states that the municipalities must provide a pedagogical psychological service.

Although the official policy has been inclusion for more than 20 years, Norway had 40 national schools for special needs education until 1992. Since 1991, a reorganisation of special needs education has been taking place. A main objective of the reorganisation has been to change from a system of special schools to a system of full inclusion. An important element of the reorganisation is that 20 of the former national special schools have been changed into resource centres. Another



important element is the five-year research programme (1993–98) that aims at defining measures and services to be developed in order to give all learners a high quality education in their own community. In addition, a research and development programme has begun with emphasis upon strengthening the educational-psychological service at the community level.


In 1996 and 1997, this reorganisation of special needs education was evaluated. Based on this evaluation the Ministry in March 1998 submitted a White Paper to the Parliament with suggestions on how special needs education should be organised in the future. From August 1999 there will be a reduction of personnel resources in the National Resource Centres and a corresponding increase in the local educational-psychological offices. The policy is that the support must be available where the pupil is – in the municipalities' mainstream schools.

Definitions of SEN/disability

The term 'special needs education' is used for pupils who are unable to follow the mainstream course of studies. Pupils with SEN are not categorised in the law nor in the curriculum. The national resource centres and to some extent also specialist teacher training are organised according to categories that are left over from the old special school system:

- visual impairment
- hearing impairment
- physical impairment
- communication and speech impairment
- behavioural and emotional disorders
- specific learning disabilities
- severe learning disabilities

In practical work with pupils with SEN, there has been a shift from the use of medical diagnosis to a description of how a pupil functions. Special needs education should be based on the possibilities within the pupil's abilities rather than focused on weaknesses. A 'disability' is described as a discrepancy



between the capabilities of the individual and the functions demanded of him or her by society in areas which are essential to the establishment of independence and a social life. This means that changes in society may reduce a person's disability.

Assessment

The overall aim is to identify pupils with SEN as early as possible. All local health centres co-operate with the educational-psychological service centres, so many children with SEN are identified before they start school.

Health service, kindergartens, schools and parents can ask the educational-psychological service centre for help, but before the centre can write an expert report about the pupil's needs, the parents have to give their written approval. The expert report has to contain reasons why a pupil needs special education and describes the content of the special education, the extent and how the education ought to be organised. The school then works out an individual plan. This plan must take into consideration the advice of the educational psychological service centre, but also adapt the special needs education to the curriculum taught to the rest of the class. The expert report gives advice to the municipality on how the measures taken for the pupil can ensure that s/he will get an equivalent education to that of pupils without SEN. If the municipality has professional reasons for not following the advice, these reasons must be documented.

As special needs education is decided by an individual decision, parents can make a complaint at the national educational offices if they are not satisfied with the special education provided for their child.

Provision for pupils with SEN

For the majority of pupils with SEN, special education is provided at the mainstream school to which the pupil belongs, most often within his or her own class. The pupils may also be taught in small groups together with other pupils with SEN, or



individually. For many pupils a combination of these organisational models is practised.

Until 1992, Norway had 40 national schools for special education. As a part of the reorganisation of special education, 20 have been closed and 20 of the former national special schools have been changed into state resource centres. There are resource centres for pupils with certain disabilities including visual and hearing impairment, dyslexia, behavioural and emotional disorders, severe learning difficulties and mental disabilities. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, four regional resource centres have been established for persons born both deaf and blind. An autism programme and a national resource centre for MBD/ADHD, Tourette's Syndrome and Narcolepsy have also been started. A special development programme has been initiated for Northern Norway,

The support system for mainstream schools consists of the educational psychological services (285) in the municipalities and the 20 national resource centres.



3.16 Portugal


Inclusion policy

Until the 1970s, the education of pupils with SEN in Portugal was provided in special institutional settings. A clear policy of inclusion of pupils with sensory and physical disabilities in mainstream education started in the middle of the 1970s. During this period a Special Education Service was established in the Ministry of Education. This department has created *special education teams* – a service mainly composed of itinerant or mobile teachers covering different learning levels – in order to support pupils with disabilities in mainstream schools. However, it was only after the publication of the Comprehensive Law for Education (1986) and with the Decree of 1991, that the legal instruments were established which guarantee the rights and the ways for disabled pupils to access and to be educated in mainstream schools. The Comprehensive Law establishes nine years of compulsory education and states that special needs education is mainly organised in diversified models of inclusion. In some complex and/or severe situations special needs education can take place in specific institutions.

From 1990 onwards, education has been compulsory for pupils with SEN.

Educational support for pupils with SEN is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, although there are still some special schools under the responsibility of the Solidarity and Social Security Ministry (special schools run by private non-profit-making organisations). The Ministry of Education has also some agreements with private (profit- and non-profit-making) special schools. In Portugal, the schools and the support teachers are managed by five Regional Education Directorates.

From a historical perspective, the care of pupils with SEN has been developed from a segregated into a more inclusive approach, with the placement of a large number of specialist teachers in mainstream schools. These teachers are more and more viewed as an educational support and resource service




for mainstream schools. Special institutions are thus also being gradually transformed into specific resource centres that offer support to the mainstream education and the social community.

An important law that establishes the principles of special education is the Decree 319/91. This legislation states that pupils should attend their home schools and establishes their placement in the least restrictive environment. In Portugal, this demands a change of attitudes and realistic measures. The assessment of SEN is now education-based. Teachers and the parents gain more influence; they are now a key part of the construction of the pupil's Individual Educational Plan that this law demands. To put this into practice the school must initiate several activities in order to influence positively the process of learning, such as special remedial equipment, special assessment conditions or flexibility of the curriculum. The law establishes that this Individual Education Plan (IEP) is to be developed by the Educative Support Teacher in co-operation with the Psychology and Guidance Services (SPO), both belonging to a major structure – Educative Support Specialist Services.

After a long period of reflection and debate, a new law came out in 1997 (Law 105/97). Through this law, the organisation of the answers to SEN clearly changed, by placing support teachers as a school-based resource service, working directly with the school boards and co-operating very closely with class teachers, in differentiating educational approaches and strategies in order to improve all pupils' learning processes.

New recent developments regarding the reorganisation of National Curricula (Decree nº 6/01 of 18/01) and specifically for deaf pupils, multi-handicapped pupils and early intervention actions are being organised in terms of support (units of support for deaf pupils and a Resource Centre for multi-handicapped).

In Portugal, there are now 6,877 support teachers that support one or more mainstream schools and 396 teachers (81% have specialist training in Special Education) belonging to 186 *co-ordination teams*. The functions of the last group are: to co-ordinate related services and resources in their school area; to



detect SEN; organise a variety of interventions in order to improve the differentiation of pedagogical practices and adapt the curriculum. At the moment some projects are run by the co-ordination teams in Portugal in order to develop co-operation between local services concerning health, social services, work and private education (with special schools), for example in the field of early intervention, or transition to adult and active life. They also organise training sessions for the support teachers in their area and information sessions open to the community. The school as a whole is now the workplace of 'special' teachers.

Definitions of SEN/disability

Until the 1980s, it was a custom to classify disabilities in categories that were based on medical concepts. In the 1980s, the concept of specific educational needs was introduced, classifying disabilities more on an educational basis. Pupils with particular educational needs are described as pupils who demand special resources and/or adaptations in their learning process, showing difficulties in one or more areas of learning – for instance, reading, writing or mathematics – that are not the same for the majority of the pupils of their age.

Provision for pupils with SEN

Portugal provides education for pupils with SEN both in mainstream school and in special schools. The inclusive teaching of pupils with SEN is organised by the schools (class teacher, support teacher, educational board). In 2001, there were 186 co-ordination teams, and 116 special schools under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Next to these facilities, 38 special schools were managed by the Solidarity and Social Security Ministry. The special schools, under the management of the Ministry of Education are 88 co-operative non-profit making schools and 28 private profit-making schools. In special needs education provision, under the direction of the Ministry of Education, 6,877 teachers are involved in the support of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools.



Although there is a clear inclusion policy in Portugal, at times special classes emerge within the system, mainly for deaf and multi handicapped pupils.



3.17 Spain


Inclusion policy

In Spain, the inclusion of pupils with disability-related SEN started with an experimental educational inclusion programme in 1985. This inclusion programme covered placement of no more than two pupils with SEN per class and the maintenance of a ratio of 20–25 pupils per teacher in groups with pupils with SEN. In addition, this programme included preferential attention from the educational and psycho-pedagogical guidance teams (EOEP) and allocation of material resources and extraordinary financial credit lines.

After three academic years, the experiment was evaluated. Since the results were found positive, the programme was extended to a larger number of schools to cover the real demand for education of pupils with SEN. In 1995, it was established that all publicly funded schools would be obliged to provide education for pupils with SEN. Inclusion is no longer an experimental programme, it has been extended to as many publicly funded schools as required, according to pre-planning designed to meet the needs of pupils for educational provision.

Inclusion covers infant education, primary education, compulsory secondary education, baccalaureate, vocational training and adaptations and reservations of university places. Inclusion was extended to compulsory secondary education in 1996/97. Another recent innovation is the extension of the term 'SEN' to highly gifted pupils. Intellectually high achieving pupils are now included within the framework of pupils with SEN.

In Spain, the so-called 'guide to inclusion' is used: a document that lists all inclusion schools and available resources in the area managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This guide has recently been updated.




Document 1: Informe nacional anual (2001) que la Oficina Internacional de Educación del Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte emite cada año:

The Constitutional Act on the Governance of the Education System (LOGSE) of 1990 regulates and organises special education within the framework of general education and introduces the concept of SEN. This latter term covers anything from the most ordinary and ephemeral of needs to those of a more severe and permanent nature. All educational necessities are to be catered for within the framework of a comprehensive education system open to diversity.

The Constitutional Act on the Participation, Evaluation and Administration of Educational Establishments (LOPEG) defines the population with SEN, distinguishing between pupils with SEN deriving from social or cultural disadvantage from those with physical, mental or sensorial disabilities or severe behavioural disorders.

Pursuant to the new approach to SEN, special education is defined as the deployment, organisation and application of educational resources for the benefit of pupils to ensure that, regardless of their personal difficulties and educational needs, they reach optimum personal and social development.

The specific nationwide legislative framework that constitutes the grounds for special education comprises the following basic texts: the Spanish Constitution of 1978, Act 13/1982 on Social Mainstreaming of People with Disabilities (LISMI), Royal Decree 334/1985 on Regulation of Special Education, Constitutional Act 1/1990 on the General Governance of the Education System (LOGSE) and the Constitutional Act 9/1995 on the Participation, Evaluation and Administration of the Educational Establishments (LOPEG). In addition to these basic texts, regulations of a subordinate rank are likewise relevant to special education, such as the 1996 regulations on conditions and procedures for making more flexible the length of compulsory school enrolment for exceptionally gifted pupils with SEN, subject to special circumstances, which is also applicable nationwide. These general regulations establish a model for special education and an approach to educational measures



designed for pupils with the same type of SEN, which are applicable in all autonomous regions.

The national regulations are supplemented by rules laid down by the various autonomous needs to their respective scopes of competence.

The process followed for enrolling pupils with SEN in school is the same in all autonomous regions. Throughout the country, prevention and early detection are pursued to establish educational measures to palliate the effects on pupils' learning processes; therefore, schooling takes place as early as possible, from the time the need is detected. Moreover, these pupils are granted priority for the enrolment in pre-primary education, given the preventive and rehabilitative nature of this phase of education.

Special educational needs are diagnosed after a psycho-pedagogical evaluation process, conducted by each autonomous region's specialist counselling services. Such evaluation is issued together with a report on school enrolment which, on the grounds of the support available and adaptations required by the pupil, proposes the most suitable formula and the school or schools closest to his/her home that meet all the requirements in terms of resources, specialist personnel etc. Parents' or guardians' opinions are always taken into account before proceeding to school enrolment.

The decision adopted is always subject to revision. Indeed, it must be reviewed at the end of each educational phase or more often when the pupil is in special education units or schools, to facilitate more intense mainstreaming wherever possible.

Nationwide regulations on the attention provided for pupils with SEN associated with a disability address different enrolment formulas depending on the nature of such needs and the resources needed to meet them:

- enrolment in mainstream units and schools, with any necessary support and adaptations;



- enrolment in special education units in mainstream schools; and
- enrolment in specific special education schools.

Wherever possible, pupils with SEN are enrolled in mainstream schools and, in accordance with the principle of normalisation, in the educational establishment in the pupil's district or the one closest to where s/he lives.

Pupils are enrolled in specific special education units or schools insofar as their needs cannot be met in a mainstream school and only for as long as his/her impairment or disability impedes inclusion.

In order to ensure suitable educational support for such pupils, all autonomous regions have established the possibility of defining schools for preferred enrolment for certain disabilities when the response to needs entails the existence of exceptional facilities and equipment or professional specialities that are not readily available. Moreover, the participation of the parents or legal guardians of children with SEN in the pupils' enrolment and education process is a key concept in all autonomous regions; the tendency to convert special education schools into educational resource centres open to the professionals concerned is likewise observed across all regions.

The educational levels for pupils with SEN are the same as for other pupils. Therefore, these pupils are mainstreamed in pre-school, primary and compulsory secondary education, baccalaureate, vocational training and university with the respective adaptations.

Given that special education is included in the mainstream education system, the respective objectives must adhere to general educational premises, although adjusted to pupils' needs. The general objectives of the various educational phases constitute the standard reference for the individual curricular models or adaptations for pupils with SEN, whether they are enrolled in mainstream or special education schools. In



the later, given their specific nature, the objectives of compulsory education undergo more significant adaptations and the programmes are fundamentally designed to develop skills associated with personal independence, social mainstreaming and employability.

Enrolment of pupils with SEN in the various levels and phases of the system begin and end, generally speaking, at the ages laid down in the LOGSE, with certain exceptions. One of these is the possibility for highly gifted pupils to begin compulsory education one year earlier or reduce the duration by a total of two years (one in primary education and the other in compulsory secondary education). This exceptional measure must be authorised by the education inspection service in the respective autonomous region, in accordance with established procedures and subject to the respective psycho-pedagogical evaluation.


The specific education units or schools that cater for pupils who cannot be mainstreamed offer the following schooling: compulsory basic training, supplementary vocational training, transition to adult life or social guarantee programmes for pupils with SEN.

Basis compulsory training, with a minimum duration of ten years, established nationally, tends to develop the skills laid down under the general objectives on pre-school and primary schools master programmes, although it may also accommodate the development of skills corresponding to other educational levels, depending on pupils' needs.

In any event, pupils in specific special education units or schools may only remain in school until they reach the age of 20.

Finally, the social guarantee programmes for pupils with SEN may be delivered in specific special schools or mainstream public or private establishments.

The evaluation of pupils with SEN is based on the evaluation criteria established in the master programme for the respective



phase and the curricular adaptations made in each specific case. It is a joint task to be undertaken by all the professionals involved in the pupils' education, including the specialist counselling services. The procedures followed are the same as for the rest of the pupil's classmates, account taken of the his/her specific difficulty when applying evaluation procedures. At the end of the school year the results achieved by each of the pupils with SEN are evaluated in terms of the objectives proposed on the grounds of the initial appraisal; this makes it possible to adjust the plan of action designed for the pupil as required in the light of such results.

Promotion of pupils with SEN to the next key stage is governed by the regulations in force nationwide, under which they may remain an extra year in the second key stage of pre-primary education when, according to the report drafted by the psycho-pedagogical counselling team, such a measure will enable the pupils concerned to reach the phase objectives or contribute to their socialisation. The length of time such pupils may be enrolled in primary education may likewise be extended an extra year and, in compulsory secondary education, providing neither of the preceding two phases was extended, the pupil may be enrolled for one year longer than programmed in each key stage. Under such arrangements, enrolment in basic education extends, at most, to the age of 18.

Decisions relating to promotion or otherwise are also made on the grounds of the information gathered in the evaluation process and in relation to the pupil's progress with respect to the objectives programmed for him/her. Such decision must be backed, as appropriate, by supplementary educational measures geared to helping the pupil reach such objectives. There is, however, no direct or mechanical correlation between the pupil's failure to meet objectives and the decision not to promote him/her to the following key stage.

Document 2. Capítulo V de la LOGSE: special education
Article 36:

1. The education system shall have at its disposal the necessary means for pupils with special needs, whether they be temporary or permanent, to successfully obtain the same



general objectives laid down for all pupils within the same system.

2. Identification and assessment of SEN shall be carried out by teams of people from various professions who shall establish plans of action for each individual case, relating to the specific educational needs of the pupils.

3. A normal school life and complete inclusion shall be aimed at for pupils with SEN.

4. At the end of each year pupil with SEN shall have his/her work assessed. After comparing with the objectives proposed at the start of the initial assessment, the future plan of action may then be made, depending on the results of the year.

Article 37:

1. In order to achieve the aims stated in the preceding article, the educational system must have the appropriately specialist team of qualified professionals, as well as the necessary teaching means and materials to involve the pupils in learning processes. Schools must have the said school organisation at their disposal and make the necessary curriculum changes and diversifications to enable the pupils to achieve the objectives that have been set out for them. Physical and material conditions of schools shall be adapted to these pupils' needs.

2. As soon as it is detected that a pupil has SEN they shall be attended to. To this end, the necessary educational services shall exist which shall serve to stimulate and encourage better development of these pupils and Education Authorities shall guarantee that school places are found for them.

3. Only when a pupil's needs cannot be attended to in a mainstream school shall he/she go to a special school. This situation shall be periodically revised, with the aim that, whenever possible, the pupil may, in time, become more included in normal school life.

4. Education authorities shall control and encourage involvement from parents or tutors in the decisions which affect the education of pupils with SEN.

Document 3: Recursos de que disponen los centros sostenidos con fondos públicos para dar respuesta educativa al alumnado



con necesidades educativas especiales asociadas a discapacidad o a sobredotación intelectual:

Mainstream schools are equipped with the human and material resources required for providing education to the above pupils, such as:

- specialist teachers in therapeutic education;
- specialist teachers in hearing and language;
- Educational and Psycho-educational Guidance Teams (EOEP);
- guidance department at secondary schools;
- physiotherapist at schools that take in pupils with motor-type needs;
- support teachers and tutors with training in the use of oral and visual systems of communication and a command of sign language at schools that take in pupils with communication and language disabilities, pursuant to the agreement between the Ministry of Education Culture and Sports and the Spanish National Confederation of the Deaf (CNSE);
- specialist teachers giving special care to sight-impaired pupils, pursuant to the agreement between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and the Spanish National Organisation of the Blind (ONCE);
- other professionals such as educational technicians, carers and nurses;
- teaching aids and resources to ensure that pupils with SEN can pursue and participate in all school activities, particularly pupils with communication and language, motor and sight disabilities.

Each autonomous community establishes, using its competence, the assignation of these resources for the meeting of needs of those pupils, and the conditions in which the assignation is carried out.

At special schools, the provision of human and material resources is increased and the specialist/pupil ratio is decreased depending on the needs of pupils.



Definitions of SEN/disability

In Spain, pupils with SEN are defined as pupils who, for a period during or throughout their schooling, require specific special-purpose educational support and attention as they suffer from physical, intellectual or sensory disabilities, have severe behavioural disorders or are in underprivileged social or cultural situations.

Seven categories of disabilities are distinguished:

- intellectual
- serious personality disorders / autism
- vision
- hearing
- motor
- multiple impairment
- highly gifted.

Assessment

Psycho-pedagogical assessment is conducted by educational and psycho-pedagogical guidance teams (EOEP) or by school guidance departments in compulsory secondary education or special schools. The assessment is based upon the pupil's interaction with the contents and materials to be learnt, the teacher, peers in the classroom and school and the family. If a pupil is not in school, the interaction of the pupil with his or her social setting is assessed. Within the assessment different procedures, techniques and instruments are used such as observations, protocols for the assessment of curriculum abilities, questionnaires, psycho-pedagogical tests, interviews and reviews of schoolwork.

The EOEP issues the 'opinion on schooling' that consists of conclusions regarding the process of psycho-pedagogical assessment, guidance on the proposed curriculum, the opinion of the parents and a reasoned proposal for educational provision, depending on the needs of the pupil and the characteristics and possibilities of the schools in the catchment area. The proposal may refer to special education schools or



mainstream schools and is subject to a process of monitoring and periodical review.

After the EOEP issues the 'opinion on schooling', the Educational Inspectorate issues the report. The last step is that the Provincial Directorate, or the educational provision committee, hands down the decision.

The SEN of pupils are identified and assessed by guidance teams or services composed of specialists from multiple disciplines who carry out the psycho-educational evaluation to ensure proper educational provision.

Depending on the particular missions that they also perform, the teams are classed as: general-purpose, early care and special-purpose teams.

Apart from conducting the psycho-educational evaluation in question, *general-purpose teams* lend advice and educational technical assistance to infant and primary schools and, where applicable, to special schools as required in order that the pupils with SEN schooled there receive the best possible educational provision.

The *early care teams* and, where applicable, the general purpose teams are responsible for early detection of special educational needs and for giving guidance and assistance to parents with a view to the optimum development of their children. These teams liaise with hospitals. When hospitals detect a need of this type, they pass it on to the appropriate base centre of Institute of Migrations and Social Services (IMSERSO) or to the Early Care Team.

Special-purpose teams lend specialist assistance to the general-purpose teams, early care teams and guidance services at secondary schools providing education to pupils with SEN and, together with the other teams, to any schools and pupils who so require.



Provision for pupils with SEN

Special schools provide education for pupils who, according to the assessment and opinion handed down by EOEP, require significant and extreme adaptations of the official curriculum for which they are eligible on the basis of their age. Special schools provide for pupils whose SEN are so complex that they cannot be catered for in a mainstream school and contribute to maximising the quality of life of these pupils.

There are boarding schools to accommodate pupils who live far away from the special education school. The so-called 'concerted' special schools are private centres that are financed with public funds. Under some circumstances, in rural areas special classrooms are set up in mainstream schools. These are referred to as special education school substitute classrooms.


In Spain there are about 230 special facilities. They can be categorised as follows:

| | |
|--|----|
| State special schools (CPEE) | 74 |
| Special education school substitute classrooms | 50 |
| Concerted special education schools | 97 |
| Private special education schools | 11 |

The pupils who have less severe difficulties are educated in mainstream infant/primary and secondary education schools. All publicly funded schools are obliged to provide education for pupils with SEN, two pupils per class.

The Ministry of Education and Culture provides these schools with human resources who are responsible for providing support to pupils with SEN. This group of professionals consists of specialist therapeutic pedagogic teachers, specialist hearing and language teachers, specialist physical education teachers, technical vocational training teachers, assistant technical educators, physiotherapists, nursing officers, educators and doctors.

Some of these professionals make visits, or are based at one school and serve other schools from there. There are 4,000



specialist therapeutic teachers and specialist hearing and language teachers.

Educational provision for pupils with SEN:

1. Pupils with SEN will be schooled preferably at infant schools, for which they will have priority. Exceptionally, and in special cases, provision may be made at special schools.
2. Compulsory schooling will be provided at mainstream or at special schools, as determined by the established criteria on educational provision.
3. Educational provision for pupils with SEN who are schooled at mainstream schools will be made in the context and under generally applicable conditions of primary and secondary education, which will be adapted to their needs. There will be exclusive schools, in both primary and secondary education, for educating deaf pupils and for pupils with motor impairment.
4. The type of educational provision for pupils with SEN will be regularly reviewed and their families will be consulted.
5. Pupils with SEN associated with severe or profound mental retardation, multiple impairments or serious personality disorders will be schooled at special schools. In any event, there should be liaison and co-operation between special schools and mainstream schools.
6. There may be special schools for deaf pupils.



3.18 Sweden

Inclusion policy


The Swedish Education Act stipulates equal access to equivalent education for all pupils and young persons, regardless of sex, geographical location and social and economic circumstances. The Act states that education must 'give the pupils knowledge and skills and, in partnership with homes, promote their balanced development into responsible individuals and members of society'. Account must be taken to pupils in need of special support. The Education Act is supplemented with special ordinances such as regulations for pupils with disabilities.

The local authorities have the operational and financial responsibility for education in Sweden. The operation is goal-oriented and the Swedish parliament and government define the goals for compulsory basic schools in the National Curriculum. The goal-oriented system makes it possible to adapt education to individual needs in the local operation.

The local authorities collect financial resources for education through taxes and are responsible for the division of these resources. Local authorities are also responsible for running the day-to-day activities of the schools to ensure that these goals are achieved. An education plan has to be adopted, describing how school activities are organised, developed and evaluated. The head teacher of each individual school has the task of drawing up a local working plan based upon curricula, the national objectives and the education plan.

The National Agency for Schools has the task of developing, evaluating, following up and supervising public-sector schooling in Sweden as well as putting forward proposals for the development of the schools.

Since the late 1950s, an increasing number of pupils with SEN have been included into mainstream schools. In 2002, most pupils in need of special support are taught in the same organisation of compulsory basic schools and the concept of



mainstreaming is no longer relevant. Within schools special teaching groups can be organised for pupils in need of special support.

Municipalities run a special programme for pupils with severe learning disabilities. Education for these pupils can take place in special classes. There are special schools only for pupils who are deaf or have hearing impairments.

Definitions of SEN/disability

The attention to medical definitions of problems is changing into a focus on the consequences of the impairment rather than on the impairment itself. Focusing upon the consequences of impairment, one discovers that the problems of everyday life are often the same for different impairments.

In 1980, the World Health Organisation published an analysis that distinguished impairments, disabilities and handicaps. This distinction has, in Sweden, a growing impact within education. It implies that a handicap always has to be defined in terms of the relationship between the individual and his or her environment.

Assessment

All pupils in need of special support have a plan of development set up in collaboration with parents, the experts involved and as far as possible the child himself/herself. Parents are involved in all investigation and assessment.

Provision for pupils with SEN

A pupil in need of special support can receive various forms of support. If the needs cannot be met by existing pedagogical staff and classroom situations a special education teacher can support the pupil in the classroom or in a special group outside the classroom. Within compulsory schools special teaching groups can be organised for pupils in need of special support.

Municipalities run a special programme for pupils with severe learning disabilities. Education for these pupils can take place in



special classes. Pupils who are ill for a longer period can be taught in a hospital or at home.

There are special schools only for the deaf and hearing-impaired.



3.19 Switzerland

Inclusion policy

The responsibility for obligatory schools (*Volksschule*) in Switzerland lies within the cantons (provinces) which means that there are 26 different educational systems. According to their educational policy and organisation they allow different degrees of inclusion. Furthermore, funding of special education is not only taken care of by the municipal communities and cantons but also substantially influenced by the national invalidity insurance (*Invalidenversicherung, IV*). The inclusion of pupils with handicaps who are recognised and therefore financially supported by invalidity insurance is therefore highly dependent on the policy of the invalidity insurance. The trend goes into the direction that inclusion is generally supported and that the framework is being created to make it possible also for pupils with major handicaps to attend mainstream schools. At present there is a rule that invalidity insurance financially supports 6–8 lessons per week, provided the canton has created the basis for inclusion, e.g. by means of guidelines, memoranda or concepts (for models of inclusion, see below).

Inclusive teaching has been introduced in some cantons, especially in the French-speaking and Italian-speaking part of the country, in the 1970s. Today, 25 of 26 cantons report to have a legal basis for inclusion. Only few cantons, however, have a law explicitly regarding the inclusion of pupils with handicaps.

The Swiss educational system is very diversified. On one hand, the federal system has the advantage that school structure can be adapted to cantonal, regional or local conditions. The disadvantage is that schooling possibilities vary according to financial strength, political direction or social trends in the respective cantons. This leads to different opportunities in the educational sector.



Definitions of SEN

The primary target group of inclusive teaching are the pupils. Teaching is being individualised and differentiated to their benefit, in order to empower them to learn according to their capabilities and resources. It depends on which pupils are to be included: pupils with learning difficulties, pupils with learning disabilities, pupils with physical handicaps, pupils with behavioural problems (even within Switzerland, there is no generally agreed terminology). In several cantons, a broadening of the point of view on inclusion can be observed: starting from the 'narrow' form of inclusion, encompassing pupils with learning and behavioural problems only, the target group is being enlarged. Concepts, regulations and guidelines are being created, principally to make the handling of heterogeneity possible, and also including pupils with more severe handicaps. Last but not least, this development has been propelled by the trend towards the support of gifted pupils.

The national Invalidity Insurance Law and the respective Regulation describe the different categories of handicaps (mostly more severe handicaps). This law is especially important for the funding of more 'severely' handicapped pupils. The following categories are mentioned in the Regulations:

- (a) Insured with a mental handicap
- (b) Insured as a blind person, or as a person with visual impairments
- (c) Insured as a deaf person or as a person with hearing impairments
- (d) Insured with important physical handicaps
- (e) Speech handicaps or strong speech disorders
- (f) Major behavioural problems
- (g) Insured who do not fall into one of the categories (a)–(f), but, due to cumulative health damages, are not in a position to assist in mainstream obligatory teaching.



In addition, the cantons provide assistance to additional categories of pupils with SEN.

The present position of invalidity insurance is not in favour of inclusion: pupils who attend mainstream school are in fact excluded from financial support. It is possible, however, to negotiate in regard to the insurance, as it adapts financial support to the cantonal education systems and therefore defines which forms of teaching are part of obligatory school (*Volksschule*) and which are not.

Invalidity insurance also finances additional provision for pupils in mainstream and special schools.

Provision for pupils with SEN


In Switzerland there are three forms of education for pupils with SEN:

- special schools
- special classes
- inclusive schooling.

The task of special schools is to provide pupils with special education with reference to their disabilities and needs and to impart educational contents to them equivalent to the curricula of primary, secondary and pre-vocational schools as far as possible. The curriculum, the method, the organisation of school, home/boarding school and leisure time is adapted to the disability of the pupils and complies with their therapeutic needs.

Most special schools specialise in certain categories of disabilities. The structure of special schools differ in some respects from the structure of mainstream education:

- The classes are generally smaller, groups of *circa* 8–15 pupils in average instead of classes of up to 30 pupils
- Teachers have followed specialist training, after the training for mainstream teaching (mostly 2 years more) and hold specialist qualifications.

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- Special schools have an autonomous curriculum (if they have one at all).

Special schools are under the supervision of the Federal Government and the cantons. They are also recognised by them. The Federal Office for Social Insurances has published a catalogue with qualitative requirements (1999). The target of this catalogue is quality assurance of the institutions dealing with handicapped persons.


These quality requirements also apply to special schools. The cantons are requested to motivate the special schools to follow these requirements. For this reason an increased number of service level agreements (*Leistungsverträge*) have been concluded between individual schools and the cantonal authorities. At present, this system is being tested in first trial runs.

Special classes are set up in mainstream education buildings. The structure and tasks can be compared with the situation in special schools.

There is a difference, however, between German-speaking Switzerland, French-speaking Switzerland and Italian-speaking Switzerland.

Pupils with severe disabilities who are recognised by invalidity insurance are rarely found in special classes; they are generally educated in special schools. Special classes are mainly devoted to the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and behavioural problems. The current trend in most German-speaking cantons is to reduce the variety of special classes (e.g. from six categories to one) or to dissolve special classes altogether for the sake of inclusive advancement in mainstream classes.

In the French- and Italian-speaking cantons special classes can generally be called 'Special needs classes'. In the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland there are no schools for special education but only special classes, i.e. the special classes are in the building of the mainstream schools. Therefore, pupils who




may have severe handicaps are being taught in mainstream schools in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland.

Inclusive schooling means special education within the framework of mainstream education. The terms for special education vary significantly in Switzerland, which is quite typical for the federalist system. Moreover, the terminology does not allow any conclusions about the actual practice. Also, the pattern of inclusion recommended by the canton cannot be deduced from the terminology. This phenomenon is known about and has often been criticised.

Depending on the inclusion concept of the canton or of the municipal community, all pupils – which at present means predominantly pupils without official recognition by the invalidity insurance – are being taught in the same classroom. What varies is the proportion, which can be larger or smaller. Some pupils with learning or behaviour problems receive additional support from a specialist teacher. This support can be either on an individual basis, in a group within or outside the classroom, as team teaching with the class teacher or as specialist teaching. There are almost as many models as schools. The model depends on how well the teachers co-operate.

A special case of inclusion is that of pupils recognised by invalidity insurance. In Switzerland, these forms of inclusion are mostly run as pilot projects. In these cases, the special education teacher and the pupil with a handicap fall under the administration of a special school. A smaller or larger part of the teaching (a few hours or the complete curriculum) takes place at the mainstream school. Only a few of these pilot projects have been scientifically accompanied and evaluated. Experience from these trials show, however, that it *is* possible and can be successful.

In general, inclusion efforts diminish with the age of the pupils with special education needs. It is easier to realise inclusion in kindergarten and primary school because there is no differentiation between performance levels as in higher grades (grade 7 upwards). The transition between primary school and secondary school is at the crossroads in the inclusion process,



especially for pupils recognised by the invalidity insurance and who were included in primary school.

In Switzerland, there is no curriculum for special education. Special education follows the curriculum of mainstream school while adapting the learning targets to the individual needs of the pupils, adjusted to their situation and handicap. The mainstream curriculum is defined by the cantons. The teaching of pupils with special education needs is in most cases exempted from learning targets.

Teachers of special education need a basic teacher training for mainstream schooling and a supplementary training in special education. At present the training system for teachers is undergoing a fundamental change. Teacher training colleges (*Pädagogischen Hochschulen*) have been set up and started. The training for special education in Freiburg is still at university level. In Zurich, a non-university level teacher training college for special education (*Hochschule für Heilpädagogik*) started two years ago. Other regions, which have been running non-university-level schools for special education, will include their schools in the teacher training colleges (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) as separate divisions. This process of change will last until the year 2005.

In general there is a lack of professional staff for the different forms of special education.

Additional topics

Legal changes

At present several legal changes, which have or may have an effect on special education, are under political discussion in Switzerland:

- The reorganisation of funding special needs education: the division of responsibilities between the Federal Government and the cantons will influence the funding of special schools.
- The 'Law for Equal Status for Persons with a Handicap' has been discussed in Parliament several times. The law will be



an important contribution to the rights of persons with SEN and may have a direct influence on inclusion.

- National invalidity insurance is under discussion. At present topics such as compensation to helpless persons and assistance funding are being debated.

Trends in special schooling

Different patterns of inclusive schooling are being discussed. They depend on developments in Swiss social policy, the training of professional staff, questions of funding, discussion on quality management, and fluctuations in the educational policy discussion in the different regions. Basically, the following important developments have taken place:

Inclusion is being understood in a 'broader' perspective

Only a few years ago, inclusive teaching meant the inclusion of pupils *without* recognition by the invalidity insurance, that is, less severe cases. In reality, this meant pupils with learning difficulties. Today, inclusion is understood in a broader perspective: all pupils with special education needs are included.

Different ways to bring inclusion to life

There is a certain lack of orientation regarding how to realise inclusion. Models developed by different municipal communities are not comparable. The framework conditions are not clear. Cantons try to consolidate and exchange their experiences by developing or improving their concepts. Furthermore, individual schools have the possibility of developing their own profiles ('*Schulentwicklung*'). The result is that inclusion is understood in many different ways; different patterns are introduced (organisation, teaching); professional staff with different training is employed; and different groups of pupils with special education needs are included. An attempt to co-ordinate and steer this diversity is the adaptation of the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) by the WHO. This adaptation opens up the possibility of developing a common language including therapy-orientated diagnosis, allocation and evaluation processes.



Quality and learning

When realising inclusive forms of teaching, outcome quality and processes of special teaching become important. The focus is no longer on the organisational structure but on the learning by the pupils. Topics such as the development of the teaching process, adapted forms of appraisal and the conscious handling of transitions between the different school grades gain importance. These processes are mostly embedded in processes of school development.



4 General overview

In this chapter the main issues in the country reports are highlighted. In addition some statistics that have not been dealt with in the previous chapters will be provided. These concern the percentage of pupils with SEN across countries and the place where they are educated. The following general findings have also been published in a recent European Agency report: *Special Needs Education in Europe: Thematic Publication*, a report published in January 2003, with the contribution of EURYDICE, the Information Network on Education in Europe.¹


4.1 Common characteristics of policies and practices

The current tendency in the EU is to develop a policy towards inclusion of pupils with SEN into mainstream schools, providing teachers with varying degrees of support in terms of supplementary staff, materials, in-service training and equipment.

Countries can be grouped into three categories according to their policy on including pupils with SEN:

- The first category (one-track approach) includes countries that develop a policy and practices geared towards the inclusion of almost all pupils within mainstream education. This is supported by a wide range of services focusing on the mainstream school. This approach can be found in Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Iceland and Norway.
- The countries belonging to the second category (multi-track approach) have a multiplicity of approaches to inclusion. They offer a variety of services between the two systems (i.e. mainstream and special needs education systems). Denmark, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland and the United Kingdom belong to this category.

¹ In this chapter, the information presented refers to the whole of the UK and not England and Wales, as is the case for chapters 1 - 3.

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- In the third category (two-track approach), there are two distinct education systems. Pupils with SEN are usually placed in special schools or special classes. Generally, a vast majority of pupils officially registered as having SEN do not follow the mainstream curriculum among their non-disabled peers. These systems are (or at least were until very recently) under separate legislation, with different laws for mainstream and special needs education. In Switzerland and Belgium, special needs education is fairly well developed. In Switzerland, the situation is rather complicated: mainly, different legislation exists for special schools and special classes (including special services within mainstream classes). At the same time, there is a fairly well developed system of services for special services within mainstream classes – of course depending upon the canton.

At times it can be difficult to classify a country according to the type of inclusion policy, because of recent policy changes. For instance, Germany and the Netherlands were recently positioned within the two-track system but are now moving towards the multi-track system.

Of course, the developmental stage of countries with regards to inclusion varies a lot. In Sweden, Denmark, Italy and Norway, clear inclusive policies have been developed and implemented at an earlier stage. In these countries, major legislative choices have already been made years ago: important changes have not occurred in the last few years. In most of the other countries huge legislative changes can be recognised, some of which are pointed out below:

- In the 1980s, some countries defined their special needs education system as a resource for mainstream schools. More countries follow this approach today, such as Germany, Finland, Greece, Portugal and the Netherlands.
- Parental choice has become a topic for legislative changes in Austria, the Netherlands and the UK.
- Decentralisation of the responsibilities for meeting special educational needs is a topic of the legislation in Finland




(municipalities), the UK and the Netherlands (school clusters). In the UK, schools are increasingly being resourced by their local education authority in such a way that they can make their own decisions about the best way to allocate their overall budget to meet the educational needs of all pupils on roll, including pupils with severe SEN.

- The change in the funding of special needs education is an important innovation in the Netherlands.
- In Switzerland the funding of special needs education is discussed at a political level: it is proposed to put special needs education entirely under the responsibility of the cantons (up until now confederation).
- Legislation concerning special needs education at secondary school level is now being developed or has recently been developed in the Netherlands, Austria and Spain.

4.2 Definitions of special needs/disability

As expected, definitions and categories of SEN and handicap vary across countries. Some countries define only one or two types of special needs. Others categorise pupils with special needs in more than ten categories. Most countries distinguish 6–10 types of special needs. These differences between countries are strongly related to administrative, financial and procedural regulations. They do not reflect variations of the incidence and the types of SEN between these countries.

In almost every country the concept of SEN is on the agenda. More and more people are convinced that the medical approach of the concept of ‘handicap’ should be replaced with a more educational approach: the central focus has now turned to the consequences of disability for education. However, at the same time it is clear that this approach is very complex, and countries are currently struggling with the practical implementation of this philosophy. Nevertheless, this topic, the description of disabilities in terms of educational consequences, is being debated in most European countries.



In relation to this discussion in more and more countries, using the assessment of pupils with special needs for the implementation of appropriate education is being developed. This is mostly done through individual education programmes (other terms are in use in the different countries, for example, Individual Educational Plan).

4.3 Provision for pupils with special needs

Comparing countries, especially on quantitative indicators, is very complex in the field of special needs education and inclusion. This is especially the case when some countries provide relatively precise data, and others only global estimations. Some countries cannot provide exact figures because of the decentralised character of their education system. This holds for example for Sweden, Finland and Denmark. In other countries the number of pupils in segregated provision is only estimated on the basis that, in general, pupils are educated in the mainstream education system.

However, as some specific regions or schools may always provide other solutions than the mainstream school, in these cases, the percentage of pupils in special settings is estimated as below 0.5%.

Table 4.1 gives some indications for the general situation of the type of provision for pupils with SEN.

Table 4.1 Provision for pupils with SEN ^a

| | Number of compulsory school aged pupils | Percentage of pupils with SEN | Percentage of pupils in segregated provision ^b | Year of reference |
|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Austria | 848,126 | 3.2% | 1.6% | 2000/2001 |
| Belgium (F) | 680,360 | 4.0% | 4.0% | 2000/2001 |
| Belgium (NL) | 822,666 | 5.0% | 4.9% | 2000/2001 |
| Denmark | 670,000 | 11.9% | 1.5% | 2000/2001 |
| Finland | 583,945 | 17.8% | 3.7% | 1999 |
| France | 9,709,000 | 3.1% | 2.6% | 1999/2000/2001 |
| Germany | 9,159,068 | 5.3% | 4.6% | 2000/2001 |
| Greece | 1,439,411 | 0.9% | < 0.5% | 1999/2000 |
| Iceland | 42,320 | 15.0% | 0.9% | 2000/2001 |
| Ireland | 575,559 | 4.2% | 1.2% | 1999/2000 |
| Italy | 8,867,824 | 1.5% | < 0.5% | 2001 |
| Luxembourg | 57,295 | □ 2.6% | □ 1.0% | 2001/2002 |
| Netherlands ^d | 2,200,000 | 2.1% | 1.8% | 1999/2000/2001 |
| Norway | 601,826 | 5.6% | 0.5% | 2001 |
| Portugal | 1,098,303 | 7.0% | < 0.5% | 2000/2001 |
| Spain | 4,541,489 | 3.7% | 0.4% | 1999/2000 |
| Sweden | 1,062,735 | 2.0% | 1.3% | 2001 |
| Switzerland ^e | 807,101 | 6.0% | 6.0% | 1999/2000 |
| UK | 9,994,159 | 3.2% | 1.1% | 1999/2000 |

Notes

a. More extensive information related to statistics in different countries, can be found on www.european-agency.org (National Overviews section)

b. The term 'segregated settings' or 'provision' throughout this text refers to special schools and full-time (or almost full-time) special classes.

c. In the Flemish Community, specific educational programmes exist in mainstream schools to support teaching practice in schools (e.g. for pupils from underprivileged families, refugee children etc.). Schools get additional and earmarked funding for this. The number of pupils belonging to these target groups are not included in the figures of pupils with SEN. Numbers are only referring to pupils with intellectual, physical, visual or hearing impairments, with severe learning disabilities or emotional and behavioural problems.

d. The percentage of the Netherlands has fallen sharply compared with a few years ago because of changes in legislation and regulations: some types of special schools now belong to the mainstream school system.

e. Statistics at national level do not allow for differentiation between pupils with SEN in inclusive and segregated settings (many pupils with SEN in mainstream are not counted separately).

As expected, numbers vary considerably across countries. Some countries register a total of about 1% of all pupils with SEN (for example, Greece), others register more than 10% (Finland, Iceland and Denmark). These contrasts in the percentage of registered pupils with SEN reflect differences in legislation, assessment procedures, funding arrangements and provision. Of course, they do not reflect differences in the incidence of special needs between the countries.

Information is also provided on the percentage of pupils educated in segregated settings (special schools and classes). Though the general feeling is that this data is fairly reliable for the current state of the art, it should be emphasised that these percentages of pupils in segregated settings are based on different age groups (the compulsory age range varies across countries). All countries considered together, about 2% of all pupils in Europe are educated in special schools or (full-time) special classes.

Table 4.2 Percentage of pupils with SEN in segregated settings ^a


| < 1% | 1–2% | 2–4% | > 4% |
|---|---|-------------------|---|
| Greece Iceland Italy Norway Portugal Spain | Austria Denmark Ireland Luxembourg Netherlands ^b Sweden UK | Finland France | Belgium (F) Belgium (NL) Germany Switzerland |

Notes:

a. The term ‘segregated settings’ or ‘provision’ throughout this text refers to special schools and full-time (or almost full-time) special classes.

b. The percentage of the Netherlands has fallen sharply compared with a few years ago because of changes in legislation and regulations: some types of special schools now belong to the mainstream school system.

Some countries place less than 1% of all pupils in segregated schools and classes, others up to 6% (Switzerland). The countries in northwest Europe in particular seem to place pupils more frequently in special settings as opposed to southern European and Scandinavian countries. Also here, these



differences cannot be easily attributed to a specific set of factors on the level of policies or practices, although they may be related to demographic characteristics. In the study *Integration in Europe: Provision for Pupils with SEN* (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, Middelfart, 1998) (whose calculations included a different subset of countries compared to the sample of this study) a high correlation between percentages of pupils in segregated provision and population density of countries was found. The correlation between the two variables was relatively high: 0.60 (at $N = 15$), being significant at a 0.05 level. In statistical terms, about 36% of the variance of the percentage of segregated pupils is explained by population density.

This relatively high correlation may come from the fact that in countries with a low population density, segregation in segregated special schools has some clear disadvantages. First, in these countries, education in segregated settings requires large time-consuming travel distances, since pupils have to be transported to other towns or cities. Secondly, there are negative social consequences: pupils are taken out of their social environment and have less time for their friends in their own neighbourhood. Furthermore, special settings in low-populated areas are not very cost effective. In countries with high population densities, special placements have fewer negative consequences: travel distances are smaller, negative social effects are relatively restricted and special placements could be more cost effective.

Of course, differences in the placement of pupils with special needs reflect more than just variations in population density. Some countries do have a long history of inclusive policy and practice, while others have only recently started developing an inclusive policy. However, it should be recognised that more trivial factors, of which population density is an example, may also play an important role.

4.4 Special schools

The transformation of special schools and institutes into resource centres is a very common trend in Europe. Most



countries report that they are planning to develop, are developing or have already developed a network of resource centres in their countries. These centres are given different names and different tasks are assigned to them. Some countries call them knowledge centres, others expertise centres or resource centres. In general, the following tasks are distinguished for these centres:

- provision for training and courses for teachers and other professionals;
- development and dissemination of materials and methods;
- support for mainstream schools and parents;
- short-time or part-time help for individual pupils;
- support in entering the labour market.

Some of these centres have a national level task, especially with respect to certain specific target groups (particularly milder special needs); others have a wider and more regional level task.

A few countries have already gained some experience with resource centres (Austria, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, for example); others are implementing the system (the Netherlands, Germany, Greece and Portugal). In some countries special schools are obliged to co-operate with mainstream school in the catchment area (Spain), or special schools supply ambulant or other services to mainstream schools (Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, the UK).

The role of special schools in terms of inclusion is, of course, strongly related to the education system of the country. In countries with almost no special schools, like Norway and Italy, for example, their role is structurally modest (in Norway, 20 of the previously state special schools are defined in terms of regional or national resource centres).

In countries with a relatively large special needs education system, special schools are more actively involved in the process of inclusion. In those countries co-operation between special and mainstream education is key. However, in those




countries voices are heard that special schools are threatened by the process of inclusion (Belgium, the Netherlands, France for example). This is a more or less direct consequence of having a relatively large special school system: on the one hand, co-operation of special schools in the process towards inclusion is necessary; on the other hand, the inclusion process itself is a direct danger for them. At the same time, inclusion in these countries is difficult to achieve, since mainstream schools are more or less used to transferring their problems to other parts of the school system, the special schools. Besides, special teachers and other professionals working in the special school system often consider themselves to be the experts on SEN and usually think that they fulfil the need and challenge the notion of inclusion. It is extremely difficult to change such a status quo.

Of course, this transformation implies huge consequences for special needs education. Briefly, pupil-based educational institutes have to switch into support structures or resource centres for teachers, parents and others. Their new task is to give support to mainstream schools, develop materials and methods, gather information and provide it to parents and teachers, take care of the necessary liaison between educational and non-educational institutions, and give support when transition from school to work takes place. In some cases special educators and special schools arrange short-term help for individual pupils or small groups of pupils.

4.5 Additional topics in relation to special provision and inclusion

Individual educational programmes

Most countries use individual educational programmes for pupils with special needs. This document presents information on how a mainstream curriculum is adapted, and what are the necessary additional resources, goals and evaluation of the educational approach. Adaptations can take different forms and in some cases, for specific categories of pupils, they may even mean omitting certain subjects from the general curriculum.




Recent views on inclusion have stressed the fact that inclusion is in the first place an educational reform issue and not a placement issue. Inclusion starts from the right of all pupils to follow mainstream education. A few countries (for example, Italy) have expressed this clearly in direct and legal terms and they have changed their educational approach so as to offer more provisions within mainstream education. Of course, the different approaches are narrowly correlated to the current position of special needs education in those countries.

The countries, aiming at providing SEN facilities within the mainstream school, stress the view that the curriculum framework should cover all pupils. Of course, some specific adaptations to the curriculum may be necessary. This is mostly done in terms of an individual educational programme. It is clear from the country descriptions that in almost all of the countries the individual educational programme plays a major role for inclusive special needs education. It is one of the current trends across Europe to use such an individual document to specify the pupils' needs, goals and means, and to detail the degree and type of adaptations to be made to the mainstream curriculum to evaluate the progresses of the concerned pupils. It may also serve as a 'contract' between the different 'actors': parents, teachers and other professionals.

Secondary education

Another topic in the field of special needs and the curriculum is the provision of special needs at the secondary level. As is shown in various country reports, inclusion generally progresses well at the primary education level, but at secondary level serious problems emerge. It is well known that an increasing topic specialisation and the different organisation of secondary schools result in serious difficulties for inclusion at the secondary level. It was also reported that generally the 'gap' between pupils with special needs and their peers increases with age.

It should be stressed that most countries 'agreed' that the topic of inclusion at the secondary level should be one of the main



areas of concern. Specific problem areas are insufficient teacher training and less positive teacher attitudes.


Attitudes of teachers

Concerning attitudes of teachers, it is frequently mentioned that they strongly depend on their experience (with pupils with special needs), their training, the support available and some other conditions such as the class size and workload of teachers. Especially in secondary education, teachers are less willing to include pupils with special needs in their classes (especially when they have severe emotional and behaviour problems).

Role of parents

Most countries report that in general parents have positive attitudes towards inclusion; the same holds for the attitudes in the society. Of course, attitudes of parents are largely determined by personal experiences, as is mentioned for example by Austria and Greece. Thus, positive experiences with inclusion are quite rare in countries where the facilities are concentrated in the special school system and not available for the mainstream schools. However, if mainstream schools can offer these services, parents soon develop positive attitudes towards inclusion (Pijl, Meijer, Hegarty, 1997). The media can also play an important role here.

In countries with a more segregated school system, parental pressure is increasing towards inclusion (for example in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland). Positive attitudes of parents are also reported in countries where inclusion is a common practice (for example Greece, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Sweden). At the same time, countries report that in the case of more severe special needs, parents (and pupils) sometimes prefer special needs education within a segregated setting. This is the case, for example, in Norway and Sweden, where parents of deaf children want their children to have the possibility of communicating with their fellow pupils through sign language. It is also the case in Finland for severe special needs. In Spain and Portugal, some people advocate



placement in special classes and schools. Some parents and teachers believe that special schools have more resources, competence and skills than mainstream schools, especially for secondary education and for the most severe needs (including severe emotional and behaviour problems).

Parental choice is an important issue in Austria, the Netherlands and the UK. In these countries, parents generally assume that they have the legal right to express a preference for the school they would like their child to attend. In other countries the role of parents seems to be rather modest.

In Belgium (Flemish Community) a new Decree on equal opportunities in education was passed in Parliament in June 2002. This new legislation emphasises the rights of parents and pupils to be enrolled in the school of their choice. The reasons for schools refusing a pupil are very clearly defined. Within this general framework, specific rules apply for pupils with SEN. Referral of a pupil with SEN to another (mainstream or special) school has to be based on a description of the supporting power of the school and after consultation with the parents involved, consultation and advice of the school guidance centre and taking into account the additional resources available. In case of refusal or referral, schools have to give a written statement to the parents and the chairman of a municipal or regional platform (in which parents are also represented). In any case parents with a child with SEN can not be forced to enrol their child in a special school.

Some countries, like France, point out the influence of decentralisation on the attitudes of parents: it is believed that at local and regional levels parental influence is developed more easily, and a close contact with the responsible authorities can facilitate a positive change. In Sweden, it seems that decisions on the necessary support for individual pupils are made at local level, in co-operation with teachers and parents. Therefore, it has been decided that local authorities would transfer certain responsibilities and parts of the decision-making processes to local boards, which are mostly represented by parents.



Barriers

Quite a number of factors can be interpreted as barriers for inclusion. A few countries point out the importance of an appropriate funding system. They state that their funding system is not enhancing inclusive practices.

It is not only the funding system that may inhibit inclusion processes, but also the existence of a large segregated setting is in itself a hindrance to inclusion. As shown before, in countries having a relatively large segregated school system, special schools and specialist teachers may feel threatened by the inclusion process. They fear that the survival of their position may be endangered. It is even more the case when the economic context is quite tense and finally their jobs may be in danger. In such situations it is very complex to debate inclusion on the basis of educational or normative arguments.

Other important factors that were raised refer to the availability of sufficient conditions for support within mainstream schools. If knowledge, skills, attitudes and materials are not available in the mainstream settings, inclusion of pupils with special needs will be difficult to achieve. An adequate teacher training (in initial teacher training or through in-service) is an essential prerequisite for inclusion.

A few countries, like France, consider class sizes in mainstream schools to be a negative factor for inclusion. These countries point out that it is extremely difficult for teachers to include pupils with special needs when they already have a relatively high workload.

Pupils

Additionally, factors at the level of pupils have been mentioned. Countries highlighted the fact that in some cases (deaf pupils, severe emotional and/or behaviour problems), inclusion is a real challenge. This is especially the case in secondary schools.




Common trends in Europe

What are the common trends in Europe? Has there been any progress on the issue of special needs education? What are the main challenges for the future? The most important developments within European countries in the last ten years are pointed out below.

Trends and progress

1. There is a movement in which countries with a clear two-track system of special needs education (relatively large special needs education system beside the mainstream system) are developing a continuum of services between the two systems. Furthermore, special schools are more and more defined as resources for mainstream schools.
2. Legislative progress regarding inclusion was achieved in many countries. This applies especially to countries with a large segregated special needs education system and which developed new legislative frameworks concerning SEN within the mainstream school.
3. A few countries have planned to change their funding system in order to achieve more inclusive services. In other countries, there is a growing awareness of the importance of an adequate funding system.
4. Parental choice has become a major topic in a few countries in the last few years. There is an attempt to achieve a more inclusive setting through an increasing number of possibilities for parents to choose an educational setting for their child.
5. The transformation of special schools in resource centres has been continued in most countries. In some other countries this model is being initiated.
6. The role of the Individual Educational Plan in the practice of special needs education is a common trend in European countries. Progress has been made in relation to this issue.



7. Countries try to move from a psycho-medical paradigm to a more education-oriented or interactive paradigm. However, at the moment this is mainly done in terms of changing concepts and views. The implementation of these new views in the practice of special education still needs to be developed.

Challenges

1. In general, the tension between, on the one hand, the pressure for better outputs of schools and, on the other hand, the position of vulnerable pupils, is increasing. There is a growing attention in the society for the outputs of educational processes. One of the most explicit examples can be found in England where the publication of pupils' performance, by school, at the end of key stage assessment, including performance in public examinations at the end of statutory education (16+), has drawn much attention and discussion. The results are published by the media in the form of 'league tables', by rank order to 'raw' scores.

Of course, it is not surprising that societies generally ask for more outcomes and benefits. As a result, market thinking is introduced in education and parents start to behave as clients. Schools are made 'accountable' for the results they achieve and there is an increasing tendency to judge schools on the basis of their outputs. It should be stressed that this development presents some dangers for vulnerable pupils and their parents. First, parents of children who are not identified as having special needs could tend to choose a school where the learning process is efficient and effective, and not hindered by slow learners or other pupils who need additional attention. Generally, parents want the best school for their child.

Secondly, schools are most likely to favour pupils who contribute to higher outputs. Pupils with special needs not only contribute to more variance within the class but also to lower average achievements. These two factors are a direct threat for pupils with special needs. This is especially the case within the context of a free school choice and the absence of an obligation for schools to admit all pupils within the catchment area. In this sense, the wish to achieve higher outputs and to include pupils




with special needs can become antithetical. This dilemma needs serious attention. A few countries have pointed out this dilemma and it can be expected that others will follow in the near future. It is a clear area of tension that has to be addressed in order to protect the position of vulnerable pupils.

2. The position of pupils with special needs within mainstream schools and the quality of services provided to them should be monitored more systematically in Europe. Monitoring and evaluation procedures must be developed and, in general, the issue of accountability still has to be addressed within the framework of special needs education. This is especially needed in the current context of increasing decentralisation in most countries. A systematic assessment procedure should be set up in order to control these developments and their outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation are essential elements to achieve 'accountability' in education, and also and especially in special needs education. First, this would address a growing need to increase efficient and effective use of public funds. Secondly, and this is also the case within the context of inclusion, users of educational facilities (especially pupils with SEN and their parents) must be convinced that the provision offered to them is of a good quality: forms of (external) monitoring, control and evaluation are then necessary.

It is precisely in this area that some tension may emerge. A few countries report that development towards inclusion requires reduction of labelling and assessment procedures. Certainly, it is very important that funds should be spent as much as possible for educational processes (teaching, providing additional services and help etc.) instead of diagnosis, assessment, testing and litigation. However, it is extremely important to monitor and evaluate the development of pupils with special needs, for example to increase the fit between needs and provision. Furthermore, parents need to be informed on how their child progresses.

3. Inclusion at the level of secondary education is also an area of concern. Development of possibilities for (in-service) teacher training and positive attitudes are challenges for the near future.



4. A 'rough' estimate of the percentage of pupils with special needs in European countries reveals that about 2.1% of all pupils are educated in segregated settings. It is difficult to assess to what extent progress has been made considering the number of pupils in segregated or inclusive provisions in European countries. However, during the last few years, countries with a relatively large special needs education system in segregated settings showed an ongoing increase in the percentages of pupils educated in special schools. Though exact figures are lacking, it could be said that not much progress has been made towards inclusion at the European level during the last ten years. On the contrary, the most reliable estimation tends to reveal a slight increase in segregation. Some countries still have to put their policies into practice. However, there is a general basis for optimism, especially in those countries that experienced an important growth in the number of pupils in segregated provisions, and which are now implementing promising policies.

5. Responsibility is a central issue in the field of special needs education. In most countries, responsibility for special needs education rests with the Ministry of Education or other education authorities. In some other countries, other ministries are also involved. France and Portugal are clear examples of countries where responsibility for educational provision for pupils with special needs is divided between different ministries.

In some countries, this share of responsibilities is, most likely, the result of tradition and has strong historical roots. However, one clear disadvantage of such a division of responsibilities is the fact that different approaches towards educational innovation in general, and towards the issue of inclusion in particular, may emerge. While the shift from a medical paradigm on special needs towards more modern paradigms (for example the educational and interactive paradigm in diagnostics, assessments, but also in types of provision) is most likely to emerge within the context of education, within other ministries this may be otherwise. Furthermore, it seems that monitoring, evaluation and information gathering concerning special needs provision (for example concerning the provision and number of pupils educated within that provision) are complicated in



countries where a certain degree of duality exists in responsibilities and administration.

Although in most countries the ministries of education have the sole responsibility for special needs education, there is a clear and widespread trend towards decentralisation. Decentralisation of responsibilities seems to play a key role in many countries. For example, in the UK and the Netherlands decentralisation is a crucial theme in the debate on special needs education provision. In England there is an increasing shift of resources and decision-making to those nearest the child because there is evidence that, because of increased flexibility, it brings the greatest benefits to the largest numbers of pupils needing such support. In the 1990s in Finland, the number of special schools decreased following reforms of school administration towards decentralisation of decision-making power to municipalities. Local forces can more easily influence the organisation of special needs education.

In other Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Denmark and Norway) special needs education is also strongly related to decentralisation. In these countries a law makes municipalities responsible for providing all pupils, who are residents of the municipality, with education regardless of their abilities.

The French report reveals a strong development of decentralisation in France. This evolution allows more adaptation to the local and regional circumstances. Promising developments can be accelerated within the local or regional context. Pressure of parents is then a facilitating factor.

There is a clear need to adapt national policies to varying regional circumstances. There is also a wish to have clear and closer communication with the responsible actors.

It seems that decentralisation is, indeed, a central issue in the provision of special needs education and that local regional responsibilities may well enhance inclusive practices.



arrangements and provision. Of course, they do not reflect differences in the incidence of special needs across countries. All countries considered together, around 2.1% of all pupils in Europe are educated in either special schools or (full-time) special classes.

Special schools: the transfer of special schools and institutes into resource centres is a very common trend in Europe. Almost all the countries report that they are planning to develop, are developing, or have already developed a network of resource centres in their countries. This situation has huge consequences for special needs education. Briefly, special needs education has to switch from a pupil-based educational institute into a support structure or resource centre for teachers, parents and others.

Additional topics: most countries make use of an individual educational programme for pupils with special needs. It appears from the country descriptions that in almost all of the countries the elaboration of an individual educational programme plays a major role in special needs education within the mainstream setting. It serves both as an expression and specification of the degree and type of adaptations to the mainstream curriculum and as a tool for evaluating the progress of pupils with special needs. It may also serve as a 'contract' between the different 'actors': parents, teachers and other professionals.



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