

COUNTRY POLICY REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Cyprus



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Section 1: Country priorities for education

The text below presents the main country priorities in the field of education, with special attention to the development of inclusive education.

Country priorities

1. The efforts to enhance the quality and accessibility of education are reflected in the following strategic goals of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), included in the Ministry's strategic plan 2018–2020:
 - 1.2.1 development, training and quality upgrade of the education system's human resources;
 - 1.2.2 modernisation of the administrative structures of the education system and of the school units;
 - 1.2.3 upgrading of education content, evaluation and effectiveness;
 - 1.2.4 support and reinforcement of every pupil, acknowledging diversity;
 - 1.2.5 reinforcement and upgrading of technical and vocational education and of tertiary education (Europe 2020: National Reform Programme 2017, p. 45).
2. Another priority for the MOEC is the special education reform. The MOEC has secured technical assistance from the European Commission support group (Structural Reform Support Service) and is closely co-operating with experts from the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education to prepare new legislation.



Section 2: Analysis grid

Measure 1: To improve inclusive education and to ensure that good quality education is accessible for all

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>1.1 There is a clearly stated policy for the promotion of quality in inclusive education.</p> <p><i>(Policy aims to widen access to education and to promote full participation and opportunities for all learners vulnerable to exclusion to realise their potential. Policy outlines how education policy-makers need to take responsibility for all learners.)</i></p>	<p>1.1.1 The Ministry of Education and Culture serves the needs of children with disabilities, as provided in the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Laws of 1999–2014 and in the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Regulations of 2001–2013. This legislation provides children with disabilities with all the opportunities for equal education, in order to develop their skills to the highest level. Meanwhile, the education of children is ensured and enhanced through the New Analytical Programmes (new National Curriculum), which have applied to public schools since the 2010–2011 school year (Cyprus Report on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Article 24, 2015, p. 2).</p> <p>1.1.2 All children in Cyprus, regardless of gender or ethnic origin and irrespective of the residential status of their parents, are entitled to have access to free education and are eligible for educational support. All children participate in school activities (Elementary Education Act 2008–2017).</p> <p>1.1.3 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, these services should be provided within a class at the learner’s local school, that should have all necessary adaptations and resources (National Overview, p. 3).</p> <p>1.1.4 The state recognises that all learners have the right to an education appropriate to their needs. The state attempts to provide a legal framework where those with special educational requirements can receive, in the least restrictive environment, an education that meets their individual needs.</p> <p>While the law is specifically for special educational needs (SEN), it has assisted in advancing the inclusion of special education in mainstream education. While special education has its own</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>legal framework, special and mainstream education are part of one school system with common administrative procedures (National Overview, p. 5).</p>
<p>1.2 Legislation and policy are consistent with the principles of the UNCRC and the UNCRPD.</p> <p><i>(Legislation and policy upholds the right of all learners to full participation in school with their own local peer group.)</i></p>	<p>1.2.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was signed in 1990 and ratified in 1991. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was signed in 2007 and ratified by Cyprus in 2011.</p> <p>1.2.2 Learners should receive all the opportunities for an equivalent education, training, guidance and rehabilitation so as to improve their abilities to the maximum. The state is responsible for safeguarding the rights of learners with SEN and is responsible for placing those learners in the united body of training (National Overview, p. 8).</p> <p>1.2.3 The Commissioner for Children’s Rights noted the need for the MOEC to re-evaluate its strategies on including learners with disabilities (Commissioner for Children’s Rights, 2011, <i>Commissioner’s Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011</i>, p. 25).</p> <p>1.2.4 The European Parliament commented that although educational debate had changed from talking about special education to inclusive education, legislators, policy-makers and professionals had to move away from the medical model towards a rights-based system (European Parliament, 2014, <i>Country Report on Cyprus for the Study of Member States’ Policies for Children with Disabilities</i>, pp. 7, 10).</p> <p>1.2.5 The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) commended the government’s high level of commitment to reform and modernise the education system (UNESCO, 2015, <i>Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Cyprus</i>, p. 2). This follows on from the adoption of suggestions to the Educational Reform Committee in 2014 to take measures to include all pupils in the school system, especially foreign pupils (UNESCO, 2015, p. 22).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>1.2.6 Children in primary school are promoted according to age, not level of attainment (Regulative Administrative Act 2008–2017, p. 9).</p>
<p>1.3 The concept of inclusion is clarified in education policy as an agenda that increases quality and equity for all learners.</p> <p><i>(Policy aims to address underachievement of all vulnerable groups including children with disabilities.)</i></p>	<p>1.3.1 With the implementation of the 1999 law, the education authorities aimed to make special education an integral part of the education system, while providing the maximum level of flexibility to best serve the individual needs of learners with SEN. It actively supports the philosophy of integration and inclusion of learners with SEN in mainstream education (National Overview, p. 8).</p> <p>1.3.2 The Laws for the Education and Training of Children with Special Educational Needs (1999–2014) ensure that all learners with disabilities or special needs are included in the school environment and specific measures are promoted to attend to all of their needs. The goal is that all learners have the right to be educated together, regardless of any special need or disability (UN, 2013, <i>Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 35 of the Convention: Initial report of State party due in 2013</i>, p. 10; UN, 2017, <i>Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: List of issues in relation to the initial report of Cyprus: Replies of Cyprus to the list of issues</i>, p. 15).</p>
<p>1.4 Legislation and policy for inclusive education is cross-sectoral.</p> <p><i>(Policy outlines procedures to ensure the efficient co-ordination of services, as well as clearly defining roles and responsibilities.)</i></p>	<p>1.4.1 The District Committees (DCs) which are responsible for assessing children consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Ministry of Education and Culture Chief Education Officer (Committee Chair); • a Ministry of Education and Culture representative of the relevant educational level (pre-primary, primary, secondary, technical and vocational); • a special education teacher; • an educational psychologist; • a clinical psychologist;



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a social worker; • a speech pathologist. <p>The DCs form multi-disciplinary teams which are responsible for assessing children. The multi-disciplinary teams also consist of professionals from three ministries: Education and Culture; Health; Labour.</p> <p>The Central Committee, which is responsible for overseeing the operation of DCs, deciding on Petitions of DCs and examining appeals against DC decisions, consists of representatives of the three ministries (Education and Culture, Health, and Labour) (Government of Cyprus, 1999, Law on Education and Training for Children with Special Needs, p. 341).</p>
1.5 There is a long-term multi-level policy framework for implementing quality inclusive education at national, regional and / or organisational levels.	–
1.6 Policy outlines how education policy-makers need to take responsibility for all learners.	1.6.1 While the law is specifically for SEN, it has assisted in advancing the inclusion of special education in mainstream education. While special education has its own legal framework, special and mainstream education are part of one school system with common administrative procedures (National Overview, p. 5).
1.7 Policy has the goal of supporting all teachers to have positive attitudes towards all learners.	1.7.1 The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute supports teachers and schools by providing training, seminars and workshops for the implementation of the anti-racist policy and issues of racism, gender issues and human rights. Since May 2017, for primary and secondary education, the following issues have been covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivating empathy



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the antiracist policy at our school: challenges in dealing with racist incidents • Human relations and crisis management in the school community. From conflict to respect of diversity • Racism-promoting and teaching equality • Stereotypes, prejudices, racism: towards an education on the basis of human rights • Cultivating awareness of pupils against racism and intolerance • Acceptance of the 'Other' • Developing empathy skills among pupils in the modern multicultural school • Developmental disorders and ways of dealing with them • Detecting children with learning difficulties in special education (timely detection of symptoms of dyslexia, attention deficit, etc.). <p>All teachers are encouraged to attend professional learning courses run by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, many of which have particular reference to special education (National Overview, p. 12).</p>
<p>1.8 Policy requires learning material to be accessible.</p>	<p>1.8.1 The MOEC accepts and recognises sign language following the Recognition of Cyprus Sign Language Law (L.66 (I), 2006) and sign language is used for learners with hearing loss (See also: Cyprus Report on UNCRPD Article 24, 2015, p. 5).</p> <p>A sign language interpreter is also available for training seminars organised by the MOEC. Sign language interpreters are also employed in the School for the Deaf or any school necessary.</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>1.8.2 Learners with visual disabilities are taught writing in Braille. Translation of textbooks into Braille is undertaken by the School for the Blind and provided for all learners with visual disabilities who attend public schools. There is a small library of audio books in the School for the Blind. Increased access to a wide range of books, magazines and newspapers is achieved through technological support to allow direct conversion of printed material into spoken text (UN, 2013, pp. 19–20).</p> <p>1.8.3 The information and content of all subjects taught in public schools are accessed through special technological equipment provided to children with special needs after an evaluation by the District Committee of Special Education and Training. The children are provided with communication devices, closed circuit TVs and other equipment to enlarge letters, special keyboards, special software and other technological aids (Cyprus Report on UNCRPD Article 24, 2015, p. 33).</p>
<p>1.9 Policy describes an effective framework of support for schools to implement inclusive education.</p> <p><i>(Support structures focus on different forms of educational resource centres that are locally organised to offer support to individual or clusters of schools.)</i></p>	<p>–</p>
<p>1.10 Policies outline a continuum of support for children and young people in schools, to meet the full diversity of learners' needs.</p>	<p>1.10.1 Learners assigned to special education and training attend mainstream schools, special units or special schools with appropriate infrastructure, adapted to their own needs (National Overview, p. 5).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>Children in the special unit are enrolled normally in the school and in the list of learners that attend the class according to their age (Cyprus Report on UNCRPD Article 24, 2015, p. 32).</p> <p>1.10.2 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) offer guidance in both special schools and mainstream schools. They work under the guidance of the inspector of special education, offering advice and support to specialist teachers and co-operating with teachers and administrators in mainstream schools and with other professionals (National Overview, p. 6).</p> <p>1.10.3 Within the secondary school system, support is primarily in the form of additional language and numeric tuition (National Overview, p. 6).</p> <p>1.10.4 Support is also provided by educational psychologists in all stages of education (Annual Report 2016, p. 563).</p>
<p>1.11 Policy outlines strategies for awareness-raising with all stakeholders in inclusive education.</p>	<p>1.11.1 The MOEC is in the process of reforming the legislation and policy regarding special education, aiming for a more inclusive education system. Within this framework, the MOEC is co-operating with all stakeholders involved to raise awareness about inclusive education.</p>
<p>1.12 Policy outlines the development of the role of special schools as a resource to increase the capability of mainstream schools and improve support for all learners.</p> <p><i>(The specialist knowledge and skills of special school / resource centre are maintained and further developed so as to enhance support for learners, such as those with low-incidence disabilities.)</i></p>	<p>1.12.1 The educational policy of special education schools involves a continuous system of contact between the special education and training schools and the mainstream schools in their area and the organisation of joint activities (Cyprus Report on UNCRPD Article 24, 2015, p. 4).</p> <p>1.12.2 If a specialist educator is part of the learner’s education, they must co-operate and interact with the learner’s class teacher in developing and delivering an individual education plan for the learner (National Overview, p. 6).</p> <p>1.12.3 All new special schools must be built within the bounds of a mainstream school. New and existing special schools must develop networks of contacts and joint activities with mainstream schools to minimise segregation. The schools for learners with visual and hearing impairments have a wide network of co-operation and support for learners included in mainstream schools.</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	Most special schools have developed contacts and joint activities with local mainstream schools (National Overview, p. 7).

Measure 1 evaluative comments

Aware of the importance of meeting the Education and Training 2020 objective on inclusive education, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) in Cyprus planned a legislative reform of its special education provision to be conducted in 2018. The aim of the reform is to make the education system in Cyprus more inclusive, aligned with the priorities stated at European level and with the Cypriot commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. At the request of the MOEC Cyprus, the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS), with the technical support of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency), is assisting in conducting an analysis of the current policy framework regarding special needs and inclusive education and in preparing new legislation.

The MOEC had an open debate to hear views from those who have a formal role in the education system but also from parents, associations of people with disabilities, professionals from related fields, practitioners, other stakeholders and the wider community. Furthermore, the MOEC, along with the Agency's experts, had meetings with all stakeholders in separated groups in order to discuss their views. All stakeholders submitted their suggestions in writing and the Agency experts have taken them into consideration in order to prepare their recommendations.

Measure 2: To support improved co-operation, including greater involvement of parents and local community

Agency recommendation	Findings
2.1 The full involvement of families in all educational processes is outlined in legislation and policy.	2.1.1 In 2017, the UN Committee reported that families are included in decision-making processes. The Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Laws 1999–2014 give parents the right to refer their children for assessment. Where someone else refers the child, parents are immediately informed before the assessment procedure starts and their consent is sought. Parents can submit information to inform the assessment and can involve other specialists.



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>Educational psychologists offer psychological support and counselling to parents and families in all educational processes.</p> <p>2.1.2 Where parents disagree with the decisions made about their child, they have the right to appeal to the Central Committee of Special Education. Parents can be involved in the processes around designing individual education plans. Specialists (such as educational psychologists) and teachers will take the views of the child into consideration. Parents can also attend disability assessments arranged by the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities for the purpose of certification of disability financial and social benefits. The assessment also considers the child's views during the interview.</p> <p>'Children with disabilities are generally indirectly involved in decision-making processes through their parents' (Commissioner for Children's Rights, 2018, <i>Commissioner's summary of positions in the context of the Public Consultation for the development of the new policy</i>, p. 4; Government of Cyprus, 1999, pp. 10–11; UN, 2017, pp. 5–6).</p> <p>2.1.3 After assessment and diagnosis is made, SENCOs visit both special and mainstream schools and offer advice and suggestions to school staff, parents and children (National Overview, p. 6).</p>
<p>2.2 Policy for inclusive education places learners and their families at the centre of all actions.</p>	<p>2.2.1 In September 2004, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus activated the mechanism for identifying and supporting children with learning difficulties and emotional and other problems. This mechanism facilitates in-school support for children and families before any official special education is carried out (National Overview, p. 5).</p>
<p>2.3 Sharing information among professionals and families is a policy priority.</p>	<p>2.3.1 The parents of the child to be evaluated have the right to attend the evaluation and to participate alone or with a specialist of their choice. After the evaluation, parents are informed of the Committee's decisions concerning their child and have the right to appeal to a Central Committee for Special Education and Training (National Overview, p. 4).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>2.4 Policy has the goal of supporting parental interaction and communication with professionals.</p>	<p>2.4.1 Parents can visit schools and talk about their child’s progress with teachers and other professionals involved in their education.</p> <p>2.4.2 The tasks of SENCOs, as determined by the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• preparation in collaboration with teachers and parents of an individual education plan for the child;• monitoring the development of the child based on the assessed needs;• providing support and guidance to parents;• collaboration with the school administration, teachers and any other person involved in the effective provision of the designated special education;• solving problems that arise and provide any assistance under the concept of special education (Cyprus Report on UNCRC Article 24, pp. 32–33, paragraph 168). <p>2.4.3 The Ministry of Education and Culture, in co-operation with the University of Cyprus, the Pedagogical Institute, the Fulbright Institution and the British Council, organise intra-service seminars and invite experts from Cyprus and abroad. The goal is to inform and educate teachers on disability issues. The co-operation between the Ministry and the School of Parents also promotes training and awareness-raising programmes so that parents are informed on such topics (Cyprus Report on UNCRC Article 24, p. 34, paragraph 180).</p>
<p>2.5 Schools are expected and supported to involve a wider range of partners and foster formal and informal networks that support their practice.</p>	<p>–</p>



Measure 2 evaluative comments

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Measure 3: To develop monitoring strategies, establishing a comprehensive accountability and evaluation framework for inclusive education

Agency recommendation	Findings
3.1 Policy describes clear mechanisms to evaluate effectiveness and quality in inclusive education.	<p>3.1.1 At the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels of education, overall responsibility for quality assurance rests with the Inspectorates of the respective Directorates of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Ministry inspectors are responsible for supervising public schools and appraising their teaching staff (Eurydice: Quality Assurance).</p> <p>3.1.2 The Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation, established in 2008, conducts scientific evaluation of the whole education system and results from each innovation (Raising Achievement Report, p. 4).</p> <p>3.1.3 Individual learner progress in special education programmes is assessed by a multi-disciplinary team (support teacher, assistant principal supporting the programme, counsellor, liaison officer, educational psychologist or other specialists).</p> <p>3.1.4 A written, individualised assessment from the support teacher is prepared at the end of a four-month period (Government of Cyprus, 1999).</p>
3.2 Monitoring procedures ensure that inequalities in access to educational resources at regional or organisational levels are addressed.	<p>3.2.1 Due to lack of agreed criteria, there are inconsistencies in assessment of learners and placement decisions (Government of Cyprus, 1999).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
3.3 Accountability measures that impact upon educational professionals' work reflect the importance of wider learner achievements.	3.3.1 The Ministry now seeks to organise the curriculum to focus on the learner's development, turning the attention of the teacher and the learner to what the learner learns (success), not on what material is covered, and refining the necessary teaching for each expected learning outcome (adequacy) (Raising Achievement Report).
3.4 Policy outlines common standards for service and provision evaluation for use across health, education and social services.	–
3.5 Policy outlines how to involve families in the process of evaluating quality of services.	3.5.1 The Ministry of Education and Culture is working with the Pancyprian Federation of Parents of Children with Special Needs. Representatives of the Federation participate in the Council of Special Education and Training. Responsibilities of the Council are to monitor the implementation of the Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law, as well as the formulation of proposals for development projects concerning special education and conducting research on special education (Cyprus Report on UNCRPD Article 24, 2015, p. 6).
3.6 Policy describes mechanisms to evaluate demand for services.	–
3.7 Policy supports opportunities for school teams to evaluate their practice through involvement in research and development activities.	3.7.1 The Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation was established according to a decision taken by the Council of Ministers in August 2008 and is accountable to the Ministry of Education and Culture. It promotes and supports research in schools, developing a research culture and strengthening the research infrastructure in schools (Raising Achievement Report, p. 5).



Agency recommendation	Findings
	3.7.2 Schools use self-evaluation and collect data, analyse and discuss in pedagogical meetings of teachers (Raising Achievement Report, p. 5).

Measure 3 evaluative comments

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Measure 4: To improve the cost-effectiveness of the education system, combining efficiency, effectiveness, equity and inclusion

Agency recommendation	Findings
4.1 National level inclusive education strategies are linked to long-term financial support.	4.1.1 The state is obliged to equip special schools or mainstream schools where special education is provided with all the required equipment and staff, according to the provisions of the law (National Overview, p. 4).
4.2 Funding policies and structures provide flexible resourcing systems that promote inclusion.	4.2.1 The state is responsible for making school buildings accessible to learners with special needs. The local education authorities are financed by the government to pay for school assistants for learners in special units or mainstream schools who, according to the District Committees, need this provision. The state also provides special individual equipment for the learner (wheelchairs, special seats, assistive technology, etc.), according to the learner’s evaluation (National Overview, p. 4).
4.3 There are long-term funding commitments to support collaborative initiatives between various school-based, resource centre and research teams.	–



Agency recommendation	Findings
4.4 Policy outlines mechanisms for systematic data collection on expenditure and implementation that informs cost-effectiveness issues.	4.4.1 The Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation maintains a database to provide valid and reliable information about the education system to the Ministry and European Union institutions (Raising Achievement Report, p. 5).

Measure 4 evaluative comments

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Measure 5: To increase participation in good quality inclusive early childhood education and care and enrolment rates in pre-school education

Agency recommendation	Findings
5.1 Policy clearly respects the rights and the needs of children and their families.	5.1.1 There is no official policy on the ways in which parents are involved in the adoption of the curriculum. Each school unit has its own guidelines regarding the issue of parents and their involvement (Inclusive Early Childhood Education (IECE) Report, p. 8).
5.2 Support is available for families to recognise and understand the needs of their child. <i>(Support focuses upon and what is in the child's best interests.)</i>	<p>5.2.1 The assessment of a child's needs by a multi-disciplinary team is regarded as the first and essential step in the attempt to provide a place in a public setting and additional support (either in the form of special education or speech therapy) (IECE Report, p. 9).</p> <p>5.2.2 Parents are not involved themselves in the assessment process. They have the right to be present and to be accompanied by the professionals of their choice, usually those who work with the child during the afternoons and are employed by the parents themselves (IECE Report, p. 10).</p> <p>5.2.3 Additional funding given to families does not promote inclusion; it actually does the opposite. Parents use it to fund individual therapies. This persuades everyone, parents included, of the</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>need for separate and specialised education and the necessity of therapies as a method for normalisation of the child (IECE Report, p. 14).</p>
<p>5.3 Policy outlines how ECI services should be provided for children and families as early as possible and as quickly as possible, following identification of need.</p>	<p>5.3.1 A multi-disciplinary team has been formed (Decision of the Council of Ministers, No. 84.368, 20 February 2018) for the early identification and support of deaf children under the age of three and their parents. The Ministry of Health is responsible for implementing this programme. The Ministry of Education and Culture participates in the team.</p> <p>5.3.2 The Decision of the Council of Ministers (No. 83.356, 27 September 2017) formed a Centre for Multi-Spectral Evaluation of Autism to undertake early assessment and diagnosis of autistic children from birth up to the age of compulsory education (4 years and 8 months). The Centre will serve the needs of children (identification and provision) and their parents. This will be under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (early childhood intervention – ECI – services are mostly provided by other ministries, not the MOEC).</p>
<p>5.4 Policy states that in risk situations, the child’s rights should come first.</p>	<p>5.4.1 Following a study by a commission of specialists, the School Violence Intervention Team (OAP) was established in 2010. The OAP supports schools in developing Action Plans to deal with severe incidents of delinquency in schools. It co-ordinates all involved in school support services for an immediate response to the school’s request and makes suggestions to the General Director of the Ministry of Education and Culture for financing specific programmes that contribute to the reduction of delinquency, e.g. alternative learner programmes, child psychiatric services, learner extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>The OAP also provides on-site training to teachers on school violence, bullying, anger management, staff and learner support workshops and activities, etc.</p> <p>5.4.2 Based on the Cypriot Law of Child Sexual Abuse 2014, educators have an important role in recognising, reporting and preventing child sexual abuse. In this line, an educators’ manual</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>was prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture (December 2017) giving guidelines on definitions, symptoms and behaviours of sexual violence against children. In the manual, examples of children reactions (from 0 to 18 years old) are given to educators in order to recognise behaviours of an abused child. Moreover, procedures are described in order to report a case of child sexual abuse. The importance of sexual education in schools is also emphasised.</p>
<p>5.5 Policy measures and guidelines clearly define quality standards for early childhood services and provision.</p>	<p>5.5.1 According to the decision of the Council of Ministers (No. 84.078, 9 January 2018), compulsory pre-primary education is established at the age of 4 years and 8 months. At this age, all children are eligible for free education in public schools following the guidelines of an academic curriculum. In addition, in public pre-primary schools, the educational needs of a number of children aged between 3 and 4 years 8 months are satisfied, provided that there are available places. All children attending public kindergartens are eligible for free special education and provision, irrespective of age (Special Education Law of 1999–2014).</p>
<p>5.6 Early childhood guidance is developed jointly by departments of health, education and social services.</p>	<p>5.6.1 Every district has its own District Office of Education which is responsible for co-ordinating multi-disciplinary meetings and the necessary arrangements for transition from home to early childhood education or to primary school (IECE Report, p. 1).</p>
<p>5.7 Policy for early childhood services supports cross sectoral, multi-disciplinary working at regional and local levels.</p>	<p>5.7.1 Intersectoral collaboration is generally poor and begins with the participation of health professionals or social workers in the task of evaluating a child’s needs. If there is a case of child abuse, the two ministries (Labour and Education and Culture) continue to work together in monitoring the child’s attendance at school (IECE Report, p. 13).</p>
<p>5.8 Policy ensures there are pre-school places offered to children coming from ECI services/provision.</p>	<p>5.8.1 Parents of children aged between 3 and 4 years 8 months can apply to register their children in any public pre-primary school. Registration priority is given to children of compulsory pre-primary education age (4 years 8 months and above). All other available places are offered to younger children aged between 3 and 4 years 8 months on the basis of certain criteria.</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>Priority is given to children with SEN. The rest of the children are selected according to the following criteria, approved by the Council of Ministers (No. 81.735, 2 December 2016):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children who attended the pre-primary school during the previous year, regardless of whether they are from the educational region or not 2. Orphans or children under the protection/supervision of the Social Welfare Office 3. Children from families receiving Minimum Income Guaranteed or Public Allowance 4. Children whose parents are both unemployed 5. Children from single-parent families 6. Children from large families 7. Children from families with five members 8. Children with a sibling who will attend pre-primary school in the same academic year 9. Roma children 10. Age (older children, e.g. 4-year-olds, have priority over younger children if the prior criteria are not met).
<p>5.9 Policy outlines how cost-free services/provision are made available for families.</p>	<p>5.9.1 Pre-primary education is compulsory and free in public schools for all children who are aged 4 years 8 months and above. All younger children aged between 3 and 4 years 8 months attending public pre-primary schools pay fees, apart from those whose families receive Minimum Income Guaranteed or Public Allowance. Fees are defined by the Minister of Education and Culture, in co-operation with the Minister of Finance.</p> <p>5.9.2 Irrespective of school fees, all children attending public pre-primary education are eligible for free special education and provision by specialists (special educators, speech pathologists,</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	occupational therapists, physiotherapists, etc.). Free services are also offered by therapists in the health sector, irrespective of the child's age.
5.10 Policy ensures the same quality of service irrespective of differences in geographical location. <i>(Such as isolated or rural areas).</i>	<p>5.10.1 Every early childhood education provision (in the case of Cyprus, this is the towns of the island) has its own supervisor and liaison officers do not really facilitate co-operation among them. Besides meetings between the supervisors, the everyday practices vary significantly due to different interpretations of the legal framework instructions for practitioners (IECE Report, p. 14).</p> <p>5.10.2 All districts follow the instructions of the MOEC departments. Meetings between MOEC employees in all districts with ministry officials are held regularly. The goal is to ensure that legislation provisions and MOEC policies are followed in order to ensure the same quality of services in all districts.</p>

Measure 5 evaluative comments

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Measure 6: To improve student-focused measures such as mentoring, personalised learning approaches and improved guidance

Agency recommendation	Findings
6.1 High expectations for all learners' achievements underpin policy for inclusive education.	–



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>6.2 Policy outlines that learners’ voices should be listened to in decision-making that affects them.</p>	<p>6.2.1 MOEC and the Pedagogical Institute co-ordinate the Erasmus+ project iDecide (2016–2018), which has developed an innovative toolkit and induction course to support evidence-based policy-making. This can lead to the reduction of disparities in learning outcomes and marginalisation, by supporting school leaders, school staff and policy-makers to engage in shared and inclusive decision-making.</p> <p>By implementing the iDecide toolkit and collecting rich data, the project aims to understand the complexities of how decisions at school level influence marginalised groups and develop concrete recommendations for policy and practice on how to engage in shared decision-making, giving voice to all stakeholders.</p>
<p>6.3 Teaching, support and guidance has the goal of empowering all learners.</p>	<p>–</p>
<p>6.4 Appropriate educational support is available as necessary and is fit for purpose in meeting personal learning needs.</p>	<p>6.4.1 Specialist support is provided by a range of professionals. Special education teachers and speech pathologists teach in pre-primary schools, primary schools and special schools. Furthermore, care assistants are appointed to assist with children’s needs regarding toileting, feeding, etc.</p> <p>Special schools have the appropriate staff (special teachers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists, music therapists, physiotherapists, nurses and other specialists, as well as auxiliary staff) to meet the needs of all children.</p> <p>In secondary education, children with special needs are taught by classroom teachers. Care assistants are also appointed in secondary schools.</p> <p>SENCOs and educational psychologists are appointed to serve the needs of children in all schools (Government of Cyprus, 1999).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>6.5 The learning process is based on flexible curricula based on learner centred approaches and the development and implementation of individual learning plans as necessary.</p>	<p>6.5.1 Individual education plans (IEPs) are developed for all children in special primary and special secondary education. The IEP is prepared through a team effort by all teachers and/or specialists involved in the child’s education. Parents are also involved in the preparation of an IEP. The IEP defines the individualised objectives of a child. It is tailored to the child’s needs and is reviewed periodically (Government of Cyprus, 1999).</p> <p>6.5.2 Learners in secondary education may be withdrawn from non-examination subjects or exempt from lessons due to disability while they receive educational support in other areas.</p> <p>6.5.3 The implementation of the new curricula is expected to meet the needs of all children (in primary education). The new methodological approach to subjects and the changes of timetables, which provide an additional hour to refresh the daily knowledge acquired, aim to diversify teaching and overcome difficulties that may be experienced by children from their class teachers and to reduce unnecessary referrals for evaluation to the Committee (Cyprus Report on UNCRPD Article 24, 2015, p. 35).</p> <p>Access to the curriculum is provided by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• assistive technology;• information in Braille, in large print, on audiotape, using a symbol system;• sign language interpreters;• additional time to finish an exam, or use equipment in practical work;• home schooling in case of health problems;• accessible visits/trips;• changes to teaching and learning arrangements, class organisation, timetabling;



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• support from other pupils (UN, 2017, pp. 16–17).

Measure 6 evaluative comments

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Measure 7: To improve the school ethos (such as the creation of supportive learning environments, adapting learning environments to specific learning needs)

Agency recommendation	Findings
7.1 Policy supports school leaders to value diversity among staff as well as learners, encourage collegiality and support innovation.	<p>7.1.1 All schools in the three levels of education are encouraged to implement MOEC’s anti-racist policy ‘Code of Conduct against Racism and Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents’, developed and piloted in 2014–2015.</p> <p>The policy was developed based on the Follow-up Report of Cyprus for Recommendation 20 and a recommendation by the Anti-Discrimination Body. The development and implementation of the policy responds to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance guideline 10 and is also in line with various international and European conventions that Cyprus has ratified, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe’s Recommendation CM/Rec (2010) 5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW) and the European Social Charter.</p> <p>The anti-racist policy conceptualises racism in a broad manner, including all sorts of discrimination. It includes definitions of basic concepts, outlines the responsibilities and commitments expected by each member of the school community, and provides the steps for</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	schools to follow for dealing with racist incidents. It provides schools and teachers with a detailed plan on how to deal with and prevent racist incidents.
7.2 Policy outlines the responsibility of school leaders to effectively communicate their vision for inclusive education to the school teaching team and wider school community.	7.2.1 The iDecide toolkit is being developed to support school leaders to take account of marginalised groups of learners (See 6.2 and further information in Annex).
7.3 Policy aims to ensure the recruitment of teaching staff from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities.	–



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>7.4 Policy supports schools to ensure teaching staff are able to meet diverse learning needs.</p> <p><i>(Teaching staff have competence and expertise to develop individual plans, implement learner-centred approaches and support learners in personalised learning.)</i></p>	<p>7.4.1 Professional Learning is one of the major policies of the Ministry of Education and Culture for upgrading the education system. Professional Learning is co-ordinated by the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus which is the official training operator. Professional Learning is mainly carried out within the school and focuses on the units' own developmental/learning needs, the children's needs and in general the priorities set out by the school itself. Professional Learning aims to carry out a small research in the school to identify its priorities and then to set out an action plan to deal with the specific issues and priorities. The actions set out are then evaluated and new goals are set.</p> <p>7.4.2 Teachers are supported to take part in professional development courses at the Pedagogical Institute (Raising Achievement Report, p. 4).</p> <p>7.4.3 Specialist support is provided by a range of professionals. Special education teachers and speech pathologists teach in pre-primary education, primary schools and special schools.</p> <p>Special schools have the appropriate staff (special teachers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists, music therapists, physiotherapists, nurses and other specialists, as well as auxiliary staff) to meet the needs of all children.</p> <p>In secondary education, children with special needs are taught by classroom teachers. SENCOs are appointed to serve the needs of children in all schools. Educational psychologists co-operate with teachers in order to support all learners' needs in the classes.</p> <p>7.4.4 Recent developments include policy on integration of pupils with migrant background and a code of anti-racist policy and prevention and management of school bullying (See 7.1).</p> <p>7.4.5 Support for teachers is available from a School Violence Intervention Team (OAP), including training in school mediation (See 5.4).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
7.5 The school ethos and culture is guided by school strategic plans that have high expectations for the academic and social achievements of all learners.	–
7.6 School strategic plans describe how universal design for learning approaches are used to provide individualised learning tools and opportunities.	–
7.7 School strategic plans stipulate that all learners are entitled to be active participants in the life of the school and community.	7.7.1 The majority of children with disabilities are educated within the mainstream classroom, at their local school, unless there is a specific decision from the District Committees. Even the children attending special units participate in all school activities, extra-curricular activities, school concerts and field trips along with their non-disabled classmates (Elementary Education Act 2008–2017).
7.8 School strategic plans have clear statements on the value of diversity.	7.8.1 See point 7.1 on anti-racist policy.
7.9 School strategic plans describe mechanisms for shared leadership, teamwork and collaborative problem solving.	–



Measure 7 evaluative comments

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Measure 8: To reduce the negative effects of early tracking (the early streaming of pupils by ability into different types of provision or schools) and to reduce the extensive use of grade retention¹

Agency recommendation	Findings
8.1 Legislation across relevant public sectors has the goal of ensuring educational services enhance developments and processes working towards equity in inclusive education.	–
8.2 Policy outlines how support structures that impact upon inclusive education are diverse and easily available. <i>(Support structures prevent early tracking and streaming of pupils at an early age).</i>	8.2.1 Children with special needs are supported in different ways (mentioned in 6.4). 8.2.2 Special emphasis is given to ensuring curriculum access with the use of assistive technology, changes to teaching and learning arrangements, classroom organisation, extra time during exams, etc. Facilitation includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simplification of the test papers• Extra examination time• Leniency regarding syntax and spelling mistakes• Oral assessment

¹ Early tracking means the early streaming of pupils by abilities into different types of provision or school; this includes placing children into separate schools.

The extensive use of grade retention means holding students back to repeat school years, instead of providing flexible individual support.



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scribe to note answers • Other facilities related to particular needs of children with mobility, hearing and visual problems. <p>Information that is normally provided in writing is made more accessible by providing it in Braille or in large print for children with visual disabilities, whereas sign language interpreters are available for deaf children. Special equipment as well as school assistants are provided to children at school where needed.</p> <p>8.2.3 Under Preparatory Apprenticeship, pupils under 15 years old are given the opportunity to return to the first cycle of lower-secondary education (gymnasium) (Europe 2020: National Reform Programme 2017, p. 46).</p>
<p>8.3 Assessment mechanisms are in place to identify the support needs of learners at an early stage.</p>	<p>8.3.1 A child must be assessed before they can be eligible for special education services within the school system. An educational psychologist has a major role in the assessment process. A significant time load is devoted to the assessment process (interviewing, observation, testing).</p> <p>8.3.2 A multi-professional team (District Committee on Special Education and Training) is responsible for the evaluation process and each member of the committee assesses the child individually (Government of Cyprus, 1999).</p> <p>Multi-disciplinary assessment is also in place for learners in all schools (primary, secondary, tertiary education).</p> <p>8.3.3 Educational psychologists also develop and implement preventative programmes and interventions in school for the population as a whole.</p> <p>8.3.4 Many referrals are made by schools to the Committees of Special Education and Training in order to assess children’s needs. This causes delay in assessment and support. It is observed</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	that many referrals are children who can be supported by teaching staff and do not need special evaluation (Cyprus Report on UNCRC Article 24, 2015, p. 35).
8.4 Data is available relating to learners' rights to age appropriate education.	–

Measure 8 evaluative comments

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Measure 9: To support improvement in schools with lower educational outcomes

Agency recommendation	Findings
9.1 Clear mechanisms exist to identify schools with lower educational outcomes. ²	–

² This recommendation does not directly come from the Agency work covered in the CPRA activities. A number of project recommendations have implicitly, but not explicitly referred to this issue. However, the piloting work and detailed discussions with PG countries showed it is necessary to have this explicit recommendation linked to this measure.



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>9.2 Policy outlines how methods of assessment, inspections and other accountability measures contribute to school improvement processes.</p> <p><i>(Accountability measures support inclusive practice and inform further improvement of provision for all learners.)</i></p>	<p>–</p>
<p>9.3 Policy aims to increase the capacity of all schools to meet a greater diversity of needs and support learners within their local communities.</p> <p><i>(Schools are supported to use innovative teaching methods, practical learning approaches and individual plans, focusing on learners' capabilities.)</i></p>	<p>9.3.1 In 2016, a co-funded project started for the implementation of a National Roma Platform, covering a period of 12 months. It aimed at the promotion of dialogue on Roma issues among relevant stakeholders and the Roma population (Europe 2020: National Reform Programme 2017, p. 64).</p> <p>9.3.2 The Functional Literacy Programme (reformed 2016–2017) aims to prevent school failure and social exclusion by developing basic skills.</p>
<p>9.4 Policy outlines clear incentives for schools to take all learners from their local community.</p>	<p>9.4.1 Schools in Cyprus do not choose their learners. The education system of Cyprus is centralised. All children must attend their neighbouring school and the schools cannot refuse to educate learners from their local community.</p> <p>Children with special needs attend their neighbouring schools unless there is an official decision from the District Committees of Special Needs (Government of Cyprus, 1999).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>9.5 Policy requires school strategic plans to outline preventive educational action against dropouts.</p> <p><i>(Including necessary measures so that learners who become disengaged find new educational alternatives.)</i></p>	<p>9.5.1 A targeted European Social Fund (ESF) project, Actions for Social and School Inclusion, has been launched. The project tackles issues of low performance, delinquency and early school leaving, in primary and secondary education, through assertive actions. The project will contribute to the alleviation of inequalities in the participating school units (Europe 2020: National Reform Programme 2017, p. 65).</p> <p>9.5.2 Programmes for preventing early school leaving and school failure (DRASE Actions for School and Social Inclusion): These programmes are carried out in schools that have been identified as having a high percentage of pupil school failure or early school leavers (educational priority zones). There are also programmes to support pupils identified as high risk for functional literacy and numeracy (Raising Achievement Report, p. 3).</p>

Measure 9 evaluative comments

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Measure 10: To improve the quality of school staff, focusing on the quality of teachers, quality in continuing professional development, developing teacher competences and reinforcing school leadership

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>10.1 Policy outlines how all school staff develops the skills to meet the diverse needs of all learners.</p> <p><i>(Appropriate training and professional development is provided to all school staff including teachers, support and administrative staff, counsellors, etc.).</i></p>	<p>10.1.1 Professional learning is co-ordinated by the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus, which is the official training operator. This takes place mainly in school, focusing on school developmental/learning needs, children’s needs and school priorities (Raising Achievement Report, p. 3).</p> <p>10.1.2 Targeted training is offered to teachers regarding pupils with migrant backgrounds.</p> <p>10.1.3 Actions have been included in the National Action Plan regarding the training of teachers in mainstream schools, head teachers and special education teachers. The in-service training will be provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture or Pedagogical Institute (National Action Plan for Disability 2018–2020).</p>
<p>10.2 Policy supports the development of high quality and appropriately trained teacher educators.</p> <p><i>(With improvements in recruitment, induction and continuing professional development.)</i></p>	<p>10.2.1 The National Action Plan for Disability aims to provide support to all teachers of all levels in different ways on the area.</p>



10.3 Policy supports flexible training opportunities in initial and continuing professional development, for all teachers.

(Schools and teacher education institutions will work together to ensure good models in practice schools and appropriate placements for teaching practice.)

10.3.1 The Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus aims to provide support to all teachers of all levels in different ways, taking into consideration the needs of teachers, the priorities set by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the current scientific knowledge and practice in the area.

This aim is achieved by organising:

- mandatory recurrent courses addressed to:
 - newly promoted secondary school head teachers;
 - newly promoted primary school head teachers;
 - deputy-head teachers in secondary education;
 - newly-appointed teachers of all levels and their mentors (Induction Programme);
- an in-service programme for teachers working with pupils who do not have Greek as their first language (teaching Greek as a Second Language);
- seminars based on the needs/priorities of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the objectives arising: for example, a large-scale in-service training programme was offered to teachers of all levels on the new revised curricula;
- optional seminars, seminars addressed to parents, seminars tailored for different schools and their needs, conferences, day seminars and an in-service training programme for Greek-origin teachers from Eastern Europe.

10.3.2 Beyond offering centralised training, it is emphasised that the Department of Teachers' in-service training focuses on adopting other forms of supporting teachers:

- a combination of central training courses accompanied by classroom implementation;
- e-learning courses develop supportive educational material;
- implementation of intervention programmes in school units (Raising Achievement Report, p. 6).



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>10.3.3 Educational psychologists carry out school-based seminars about special education subjects (identifying and dealing with learners presenting learning difficulties).</p> <p>10.3.4 Actions are included in the National Action Plan for Disability 2018–2020 regarding the training of teachers in mainstream schools, head teachers and special education teachers. The in-service training will be provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture or Pedagogical Institute.</p>
<p>10.4 All teaching staff are supported and develop a clear understanding of effective learning strategies.</p> <p><i>(Such as learning to learn and active learning approaches.)</i></p>	<p>10.4.1 The above courses concerned with the training of the teachers aim at promoting creative learning practices and educational innovation, while encouraging critical reflection (Raising Achievement Report, p. 6).</p>
<p>10.5 Policy supports schools to develop strategic plans of staff training in inclusive education.</p>	<p>10.5.1 Professional learning is co-ordinated by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, the official training authority. This takes place mainly within the school, focusing on school developmental/learning needs, children’s needs and school priorities.</p> <p>10.5.2 Seminars, conferences and actions relating to people with special needs and disabilities are provided in order to broaden the knowledge of teachers and to raise awareness and mobilise action on inclusion of learners with special needs in the school and in the general social environment. Specialised training on issues concerning special education is part of optional seminars (Cyprus Report on UNCRPD Article 24, 2015, p. 33).</p>
<p>10.6 Policy outlines the specialised training pathways for specialists who support school communities to implement inclusive education.</p>	<p>–</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>10.7 Policy supports research into the effectiveness of different routes into teaching.</p> <p><i>(Including course organisation, content and pedagogy to best develop the competence of teachers to meet the diverse needs of all learners.)</i></p>	<p>–</p>

Measure 10 evaluative comments

Intensive training of mainstream teachers for the New Analytic Programmes (new national curriculum, for forming a humane and democratic school) is expected to involve the school unit in the education of children with disabilities. The education system will be able to cope with the needs of all children, including those with special needs (Cyprus Report on UNCRPD Article 24, 2015, p. 35).

Measure 11: To improve transition from education to work by increasing the coherence between employment incentives, education and VET; improving the quality and accessibility of apprenticeships; promoting cross-sector co-operation; simplifying the systems of qualifications

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>11.1 Policy ensures that VET programmes should address labour market skill requirements.</p>	<p>11.1.1 A strategic plan for VET has been introduced for 2015–2020.</p>
<p>11.2 Policy aims at matching labour market skill requirements and learners' skills, wishes and expectations.</p>	<p>–</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>11.3 Policy outlines the development of partnerships and networking structures.</p> <p><i>(Partnerships with a pool of local employers to ensure close co-operation with regard to learners' supervised practical training and finding employment after graduation.)</i></p>	<p>–</p>
<p>11.4 Policy outlines how transition from education to employment is supported by adequate provision.</p>	<p>11.4.1 A recent initiative, Preparatory Apprenticeship, allows the operation of two classes to cater for the needs of pupils with different academic backgrounds and levels of maturity and development of criteria for the assessment of pupils, in co-operation with the Career Counselling and Educational Services. Pupils under 15 years old are given the opportunity to return to the first cycle of lower-secondary education (gymnasium) (Europe 2020: National Reform Programme 2017, p. 46).</p> <p>11.4.2 Children in special units receive a certificate of attendance at the end of school that has no validity in the labour market (Government of Cyprus, 1999).</p> <p>11.4.3 Children attending special schools are awarded a certificate of attendance, as well as an explanatory certificate stating their abilities in various fields (Government of Cyprus, 1999).</p>
<p>11.5 Policy supports the availability of meaningful VET options for learners to choose from.</p>	<p>11.5.1 The Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education offers a wide range of technical and vocational initial training and lifelong training programmes to eligible gymnasium leavers and adults (Annual Report 2016, p. 464).</p>
<p>11.6 Policy supports the availability of supervised practical training.</p>	<p>11.6.1 Pre-vocational training is offered to learners from special units in specially equipped workshops (Annual Report 2016, p. 466).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
11.7 Policy outlines how sustainable employment opportunities are supported through the availability of appropriate, on-going support.	–
11.8 Policy outlines how VET programmes are reviewed periodically. <i>(Both internally and/or externally in order to adapt to current and future skill needs.)</i>	–

Measure 11 evaluative comments

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Measure 12: To improve educational and career guidance across all phases of inclusive education

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>12.1 Policy outlines the mechanisms for ensuring effective transition across educational sectors and phases.</p> <p><i>(There are well-organised transition processes among services to ensure continuity in the support required when learners move from one form of provision to another.)</i></p>	<p>12.1.1 Consulting and vocational guidance for vulnerable learners is provided by the ESF-funded Actions for Social and School Inclusion project (Annual Report 2016, p. 497).</p>
<p>12.2 Policy outlines how career counsellors/officers support learners and employers regarding employment possibilities.</p> <p><i>(Support is provided with job applications, inform and support employers and facilitate contact between both parties.)</i></p>	<p>12.2.1 At secondary level, career guidance and counselling are offered regularly to pupils by the Guidance and Counselling Service of the Ministry. In addition, in the last year of gymnasium, pupils are offered career and vocational guidance (0.5 hours per week) as part of their curriculum. The aim is to help pupils choose the field or combination of studies they wish to follow in the upper division (Eurydice).</p>

Measure 12 evaluative comments

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Annex: Supplementary Information

This Annex provides more detailed information and examples for some findings listed in the grid.

Measure 1

1.8 An example of support is provided in a second UN report:

The St Barnabas School for the Blind, which operates under the Ministry of Education and Culture, has included in its syllabus the subjects 'Orientation and Mobility' for children and adults with visual impairment (body awareness, various concepts, development of senses including residual vision, sighted guide skills, guided indoor and outdoor routes, independent indoor routes by using trailing and landmarks, training in the use of the long cane, outdoor routes by using the long cane and landmarks) (UN, 2017, p. 14).

Measure 6

6.2 One of the most crucial deliverables of the iDecide project is the iDecide toolkit, which, among other things, invites school leaders and staff to consider the following factors when making decisions:

- Cultural differences: Visits to religious sites need to take into consideration the various religions represented in the school population/community of the area/country in order to ensure that religious sites belonging to religious minorities will not be neglected systematically (regardless of intention).
- Disability – health issues: All disabilities/health issues/dietary requirements of the school population and the potential difficulties they may encounter need to be considered in the initial plan of the excursion/school visit.
- Economic obstacles: Depending on the socio-economic status of each pupil, school leaders and staff need to be sensitive of the cost.
- Geographical obstacles: The location of the community and the distance that children may need to travel every day between the school and their homes needs to be considered.
- Social obstacles: Before decisions are taken, the social characteristics of the pupil population, such as the type of family, the citizenship status of the parents, etc., need to be considered.

Measure 7

7.1 The anti-racist policy conceptualises racism in a broad manner, including all sorts of discrimination. It includes definitions of basic concepts which form the theoretical background (e.g. racism, racist incidents, discrimination, stereotypes, diversity, etc.), outlines the responsibilities and commitments expected of each member of the school community, and provides the steps to be followed by schools for dealing with racist



incidents in a practical rubric. It provides schools and teachers with a detailed plan on how to deal with and prevent racist incidents.

As the anti-racist policy views diversity as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, involving various aspects of people's identities, it is expected to contribute to the decrease of bullying and discrimination based on any form of diversity in schools, including religion, beliefs, ethnicity, language, appearance, disability, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) conducted several actions during the 2016–2017 school year to support teachers and schools in implementing the anti-racist policy. A total of around 1,000 teachers from all levels of education participated in these actions (e.g. school-based seminars, two-day training for primary and secondary education, a conference on racism in education in the context of the school year goal, support of a school in the context of the professional learning programme, etc.). At the same time, the [anti-racist policy website](#) was continually updated with information on the implementation, supporting material and answers to frequently asked questions. A support line (email and telephone) operated throughout the year. To evaluate the implementation of the policy for the 2016–2017 school year, the CPI collected 41 reports from schools with details about the racist incidents they recorded. Of these, 24 schools reported no incidents, while 17 recorded a total of 127 racist incidents. The criteria were the appearance of the victims, their age and gender.

The CPI anti-racist policy website is constantly updated and support lines are available to all schools in Cyprus. In addition, for 2017–2018, the CPI provided intense support to over 30 schools of all levels which requested assistance with the implementation of the anti-racist policy. This support was provided through network meetings, translation of informative documents and telephone and email communication.