
Work Programme 2022



EUROPEAN AGENCY
for Special Needs and Inclusive Education



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Introduction

This work programme outlines the main Agency activities scheduled for 2022.

The Agency aims to support its member countries' work. Therefore, this work programme has been prepared considering their priorities. The Agency has developed the Work Programme 2022 and the Multi-Annual Work Programme (MAWP) 2021–2027 based on:

- discussions during 2018–2020 with its country representatives on the [Agency's future role and work](#);
- two scoping meetings with Representative Board members (RBs) during 2021;
- a staff [analysis exercise](#) mapping all Agency activities since 2011.

The point of departure for the Work Programme 2022 and the MAWP 2021–2027 is the [Agency position on inclusive education systems](#). The ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers. As part of the MAWP 2021–2027, the Work Programme 2022 will comprise a range of activities and processes that will further explore how countries can effectively work towards this vision.

The programme is fully aligned with and directly contributes to European and international stated priorities for education and training. These include:

- the new European Union (EU) Erasmus+ education programme (2021–2027) goals;
- the stated dimensions (inclusion is one) of the European Commission's new [Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025](#);
- the European Commission's [Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027](#);
- the European Commission's [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2027](#);
- the European Commission's policy memo [Strengthening the quality of early childhood education and care through inclusion](#);
- the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable education, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), particularly Article 24.

The work programme aims to ensure coherence between the Agency's work and EU priorities by providing countries, as well as stakeholders at European level, with evidence-based information, tools and recommendations that are reliable, valid and applicable to educational policy planning, implementation, monitoring and review.

For more information about the Agency, its work and work programmes, please visit its website: www.european-agency.org.



Organisation and finances

Member countries

The Agency currently has 31 member countries covering 35 jurisdictions: Austria, Belgium (Flemish community and French community), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales).

The Agency holds bi-annual meetings with its member country representatives. They review on-going activities and discuss and approve plans for future work, including activity plans, work programmes and budgets.

The bi-annual meetings for 2022 will be:

- Spring bi-annual meeting, Greece
- Autumn bi-annual meeting, Bulgaria.

Finances

Membership fees from the member countries and an operating grant under the EU Erasmus+ education programme (2021–2027) fund the work programme. Together, these contributions make up the Agency's operating budget.

On top of their membership fees, member countries contribute to the Agency's functioning by meeting the costs of their nominated RBs' and National Co-ordinators' (NCs) tasks. These include establishing and maintaining national networks, information dissemination and awareness-raising activities at national level, and participation in Agency meetings and activities. Furthermore, member countries cover the costs (person hours) of their nominated experts participating in content-related activity work.

As well as the activities financed by the main operating budget, the Agency will conduct some additionally funded activities. These will be non-profit-based and will complement the activities within, but be independent from, the operating budget. For further information, please refer to the section on [additionally funded activities](#).

Co-operative relationships

The Agency will maintain its co-operative relationships with the EU institutions, particularly with the European Commission, with members of the committees of the European Parliament and with Agency member countries' permanent representations in Brussels, as well as with key international bodies and organisations. These include [Cedefop](#), [Eurostat](#), [Eurydice](#), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD](#)). These relationships are considered important to ensure visibility of and support for the Agency's work for member countries in relation to the European stated priorities for education and training.



Co-operation with these organisations adds important facets to the Agency's work. It ensures that activities are mutually supportive and beneficial for member countries. The co-operative relationships provide opportunities for sharing information about work in Agency member countries with a wider audience and for gaining relevant information that can be shared in member countries.

The Agency has been an active member of one of the Education and Training [ET 2020 Working Groups](#) (Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education) and has been involved as an expert in others. The Agency will continue this involvement as a member of the European Commission's new working groups on Early Childhood Education and Care, Schools (the sub-group on Pathways to School Success), and Equality and Values in Education and Training for the period 2021–2025.

The Agency will also continue its co-operative work with UNESCO to develop and promote the [Inclusive Education in Action website](#). In 2022, the Agency and the UNESCO team will explore possibilities for joint promotional work.

Country Policy Development Support (CPDS)

CPDS is central to the Agency's role as an agent for policy change in inclusive education.

All Agency work essentially focuses on supporting countries to change, develop and successfully implement policy for inclusive education. Within the MAWP, all work will be organised around an overarching activity that all other work areas lead out of and that all work and findings feed into: the CPDS activity.

This overarching activity will focus on the effective implementation of policy frameworks for inclusive education systems. It will further develop and build upon the working processes and outputs from the [Country Policy Review and Analysis](#) (CPRA) activities, which have proved useful for supporting countries.

The overall goal for CPDS will be to establish a comprehensive framework and mechanism for examining and monitoring developments in and the implementation of inclusive education policy in countries. This framework will be developed over time. It will be based on past, current and on-going findings from all Agency activities.

During 2021, various activities took place to systematically prepare the overall MAWP that will run until the end of 2027. The scoping activities with country representatives were central to this preparatory work. Information-gathering exercises, a comprehensive country survey and online meetings were used to identify areas for new thematic activities for 2022 onwards and to determine the next steps in the CPDS work.

In 2021, the country survey and subsequent discussions with RBs highlighted four priorities for future Agency work within the MAWP:

1. Monitoring and evaluating policy implementation for inclusive education
2. Developing strategies to support horizontal and vertical collaborative, cross-sectoral working
3. Developing multi-level/multi-stakeholder quality assurance and accountability frameworks for inclusive education



4. Ensuring the effective translation of national policies to regional, local and school levels.

From 2022 onwards, the CPDS work will be developed and organised around these interconnected priorities. Over the course of the MAWP, a series of developmental thematic activities will be implemented to:

- firstly, identify and examine the wider system factors that support or hinder the successful implementation of countries' policy frameworks for inclusive education;
- building on that information, develop specific thematic activities to effectively support individual countries' policy development and implementation work.

The first of these activities will be a detailed mapping of the inclusive education systems in all countries. The mapping will cover a range of whole education system issues relating to effective implementation of national policies at regional, local and school levels. However, it will focus on the three key areas of monitoring and evaluating policy implementation, horizontal and vertical cross-sectoral working and multi-level/multi-stakeholder quality assurance and accountability frameworks.

On-going activities

The Agency will conduct a number of activities that are on-going throughout the MAWP 2021–2027. Brief descriptions of these activities follow below.

European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE)

The Agency's annual data collection activity ([EASIE](#)) provides clearly focused data that informs country policy priorities, the European Commission's strategic objectives on inclusive education and the implementation of Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

In 2020 and 2021, an automated online data collection tool was developed with revised data tables and country background information questions. The next data collection cycle, focusing on the 2019/2020 school year, will take place in late 2021 and early 2022. Outputs of this data collection cycle will be completed and published during 2022.

Later in 2022, a further data collection cycle (focusing on the 2020/2021 school year) will be launched.

In 2022, the Agency and its member countries will explore possibilities to extend and deepen the investigation of access to education and placement of children/learners from groups that are vulnerable to exclusion.

If the COVID-19 pandemic situation permits, an in-person workshop with all national data experts will be held. The meeting will serve to discuss the next steps of the EASIE work. Alongside this, the Agency will use its usual online platforms to ensure regular communication with experts.



Legislation Updates

The Agency regularly collects information on updates to national legislation on special needs and/or inclusive education. The last update was prepared in 2019. In 2022, information on developments or changes to legislation – laws and policies – that have been introduced in Agency member countries in recent years will be collected and published as the latest in the regular series of such publications.

The information collection will specifically build on the [Legislative definitions around learners vulnerable to exclusion](#) activity, the [country overviews development work](#) and relevant [country presentations of legislative developments](#) at the spring bi-annual meeting.

Country exchange activities

The bi-annual meetings experience exchange sessions continue to be useful for country representatives to gain insights into each other's policy development work. Sharing specific examples of legislation and/or policy development for inclusive education will be a specific focus of the 2022 exchange sessions. At the spring bi-annual meeting, country representatives will be invited to present recent legislative developments in their countries. These inputs will serve as an information source for the 2022 Legislation Updates publication.

Country overviews development work

The Agency regularly updates the [Country Information](#) pages on its website, based on information received from country representatives. In 2021, the Agency began preparatory work for an overhaul of the overviews describing countries' organisation of the system for inclusive education. These overviews are one of the most frequently visited areas of the Agency website. A web survey was carried out to get users' feedback on these specific pages.

During 2022, the web survey findings will be used to plan developments for this section of the website. Cross links will be established between the information in the country overviews, the EASIE country background information and the findings of the [Legislative definitions around learners vulnerable to exclusion](#) desk research activity.

At the spring bi-annual meeting, there will be a presentation and discussion of a new framework for the country overviews. Discussions with country representatives will consider how information collected via the Country System Mapping exercise can be used on the country overview web pages.

Thematic activities

In 2022, Agency work will cover a wide range of thematic activities. A number of activities are currently being implemented and some will be completed in 2022. In addition, there are new thematic activities that will begin in 2022.



Changing Role of Specialist Provision in Supporting Inclusive Education (CROSP)

[CROSP](#) focuses on the re-organisation of specialist provision to support the right to inclusive education for all learners.

Phase 1 covered a detailed mapping exercise on past and current trends and situations in countries in relation to specialist provision, as well as on perceived future trends. It identified four main issues related to funding policies, governance, capacity-building and quality assurance mechanisms, that are considered vital to improve specialist provision's role as a resource for supporting mainstream education.

Phase 2 started in 2019. It focuses on these four issues and on identifying effective policies and strategies as well as guiding principles, critical factors and key drivers, using a peer-learning approach. The aim is to enable member countries to develop more effective strategies for improving the role of specialist provision for inclusive education.

Activities in 2022 will include the development of a review tool for policy-makers. This will embed the outcomes highlighted in the two rounds of thematic workshops for each of the four issues (i.e. governance, funding, capacity building, quality assurance). The tool will aim to enable policy-makers to develop a continuum of support for inclusive education. The first version of the tool will be sent to country representatives for piloting at national level.

Feedback on the piloting process will be presented and discussed at the final conference in 2022. During the conference, participants will engage in a collaborative review and self-reflection process, supporting each other in improving their policies. Other final outputs will include a synthesis report, a summary report and an evaluation report.

Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion (TPL4I)

Phase 2 of [TPL4I](#) addresses the need for a competence framework for all professionals involved in inclusive education, as identified in Phase 1. The Phase 2 activities will conclude in the beginning of 2022.

Following the analysis and conclusions of the cluster group activities on the use of the [Profile of Inclusive Teachers](#) for a wider professional audience, the activity team will share the updated and revised *Profile* with all member countries. The countries will provide feedback and final adjustments will be agreed upon. The Agency will then publish the final updated version of the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers*.

In addition, the Agency will create a TPL4I infographic. This will provide an overview and clarification of the role of teacher professional learning for inclusion in developing inclusive education systems.

Learning from the COVID-19 Pandemic – Building Resilience through Inclusive Education Systems (BRIES)

In 2022, the Agency will define thematic areas related to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on inclusive education (e.g. blended learning, assessment and curriculum in a pandemic context). The thematic areas will be the focus of working groups involving Agency RBs and other education stakeholders.



Countries with similar interests will collaborate in working groups organised by thematic area. This will involve peer-learning activities where stakeholders will be able to exchange and learn from others. The working groups will facilitate communication around the thematic areas between policy-makers, practitioners, parents and learners. The aim is that the discussions will lead to proposals to address challenges.

The activities and the composition of the stakeholder groups will be defined in early 2022. Meetings, whether virtual or on-site in a specific country, will take place from the second half of the year.

Voices into Action (VIA): Including the Voices of Learners and their Families in Future Agency Work

In 2021, the Agency initiated a desk research activity on how to involve the voices of learners and their families in decision-making.

Activities will run in two phases between 2021 and 2022. Desk research activities during Phase 1 include an analysis of key policy and research literature on how to effectively involve learners and families. Activities also include collecting and analysing examples from previous Agency work and member countries' examples of practice. Phase 1 will conclude with the activity team drafting a toolkit to accompany the initial findings and facilitate their implementation.

Phase 2 will run during 2022. It will involve activities with several RBs, learners and families. The Agency will work across activity teams to validate the toolkit in the context of other Agency activities. It will also engage RBs, learners and families in cluster work to adapt the toolkit into an appropriate format, tailored to the RBs' needs.

The Agency will take the outcomes into account in preparing and implementing all future MAWP activities. The outcomes will also inform decision-makers and other stakeholders at national, regional and local levels who aim to promote learner and family voices in decision-making processes. The final outputs will include a final report, a summary report and digital materials.

Legislative definitions around learners vulnerable to exclusion

This activity will collect information from Agency member countries focusing on legislative definitions around learners vulnerable to exclusion in education systems, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the issue of intersectionality outlined in the Agency's [MAWP 2021–2027 parameters](#).

Once the activity team has compiled information from all member countries, the collection of legal definitions will be analysed to discover overlaps across countries, trends and key terms around learners vulnerable to exclusion. A short report will present the outcomes of this analysis. This report will include all the collected country information and an overview of findings. It will be available in mid-2022.

Inclusive Digital Education

Information and communication technology (ICT) for inclusion has been an overarching issue across Agency projects and collaborations with UNESCO and the UNESCO Institute



for Information Technologies in Education. These activities have focused on how ICT supports inclusive education systems and on the importance of accessibility.

In the Agency's 2021 country survey, country representatives confirmed the continued relevance of issues related to digital education. In particular, the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic have shown that access to learning remains a challenge, especially for vulnerable learners.

In response, this activity aims to thoroughly examine new priorities and demands in relation to inclusive digital education and blended learning. This activity will be a desk research literature review beginning in 2021. In addition to international literature, the research will consider Agency work in this field and reflect on overlaps or gaps that need exploring. The research results will be published in early 2022.

Country System Mapping exercise

In 2022, this new detailed information-gathering activity will begin. It will identify, map and analyse the key features of all Agency member countries' education systems that impact upon the effective implementation of policy for inclusive education in practice. The goal will be to identify the necessary information about countries' education systems to ensure alignment between future thematic activities and individual country education system factors and approaches that impact upon the implementation of policy for inclusive education.

In a departure from previous Agency thematic activities, the Country System Mapping exercise will consider the *whole* education system from the perspective of implementing policy for inclusive education in practice. Within this, there will be a specific focus on the priorities RBs have already identified: system factors and approaches in countries that relate to monitoring and evaluation, cross-sectoral working and quality assurance.

The information gathering will build upon existing Agency and key European (e.g. Eurydice) information sources. It will use an agreed template to collect relevant information. The template will need to cover a range of thematic areas. However, it will focus on the priority issues that RBs identified for future MAWP work. RBs will be actively involved in developing the template and the overall methodology for the information gathering.

A reference group of international experts will be established to give inputs to all stages of the activity. It is envisaged that work in 2022 will include developing and piloting the information-gathering template and gathering information from all Agency member countries. The planned outputs from the 2022 work will include the information-gathering template, the mapping and analysis framework and draft country information reports.

The analysis and mapping of the country education systems completed in 2022 will provide the basis for preparing more targeted and tailored, cluster (small group) thematic activities from 2023 onwards.

Additionally funded activities

The Agency will conduct a number of activities funded via additional grants from the EU and other sources. These additional activities enable the Agency to undertake work that



complements and reinforces the activities agreed by member countries within the main work programme. Brief descriptions of the additional activities planned for 2022 follow below.

Technical Support Instrument (TSI) activities

The Agency continues its co-operation with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM). Through the [Technical Support Instrument](#) (TSI, successor to the Structural Reform Support Programme – SRSP), the Commission provides technical support to EU countries that wish to reform their public systems. The Commission funds the activities in full.

Since 2018, the Agency has completed six activities as a technical provider for SRSP/TSI. Through these activities, countries benefit both from the Agency's legislative and policy analysis and from its implementation recommendations.

In 2022, the Agency will complete the action 'Design a system to monitor the implementation of the law on inclusive education in Portugal'. This will involve data collection on the implementation of the previously identified indicators on inclusive education and visits to several schools across the five Portuguese regions. The site visits will help to verify the validity of the monitoring system the Agency designed.

Countries can submit requests for TSI support to reform their inclusive education systems. The deadline is the end of October each year. DG REFORM analyses the requests received and selects those it will support the following year. DG REFORM also selects the technical provider that will provide technical assistance to the country.

In 2022 – like every year – DG REFORM will announce the selected requests and the technical providers at the beginning of the year. If selected as a technical provider, the Agency will begin implementing the activity in co-operation with the national authorities and DG REFORM in the first quarter of the year.

European Schools External Evaluation

The Agency is currently conducting an external evaluation of the implementation of the European Schools' Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education. The European Schools are based in six EU countries. The European Schools' Board of Governors (comprising the EU Ministries of Education and the European Commission) commissioned the Agency to conduct this evaluation. It is due for completion in early 2022.

Operational activities

Self-review activities

During 2021, the staff team implemented a series of self-review and assessment activities, aiming to develop new quality assurance tools to support overall Agency operations. The activities in 2021 led to the identification of several priority areas for development work. An implementation plan was drafted. In 2022, the Agency will undertake various tasks to put this development and implementation plan into operation.



Celebrating 25 years of Agency work

2021 was a special year for the Agency as it marked its 25th anniversary. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Agency's celebrations were postponed. In 2022, if the pandemic situation permits, the Agency will mark the anniversary with an event linked to the spring bi-annual meeting. It will involve all RBs, NCs and staff.

Furthermore, the Agency will publish an anniversary book. It will focus on developments in special needs and inclusive education during the past 25 years and on trends for future developments.

Monitoring impact of Agency work

Collecting and analysing impact examples is crucial in the Agency's efforts to continuously improve overall working procedures. This was a key focus of the self-review of quality assurance processes that the Agency developed in 2021. It will inform the impact data collection work in 2022.

Information dissemination and production activities

The Agency's information dissemination work includes producing, publishing and disseminating Agency outputs. Using offline and digital tools, the Agency ensures all information and materials are up-to-date, comply with international guidelines on accessibility and are available on relevant platforms. Education policy-makers are the main target audience of this work. However, it also targets other stakeholders, such as researchers, school leaders, teachers, parents and learners.

In 2022, information dissemination efforts will continue to align with the four main aims of the Agency's Digital Media Strategy. These are to:

- generate awareness of and promote Agency publications and resources;
- broaden the reach and impact of Agency messages;
- facilitate collaboration through digital platforms;
- strengthen Agency leadership and influence in the field.

The Agency will continue to be a resource for member countries and actively support them as they disseminate Agency information in their national networks. This includes raising awareness about new Agency materials and how to use them, translating agreed publications into member country languages and sharing country news.

The Agency will continue to explore ways in which it can help its member countries to improve their overall information dissemination.

Open-access online repository of Agency materials

In 2021, the Agency investigated various ways of setting up an open-access online repository and eventually selected the online platform Zenodo. An open-access repository is an online archive for all publications produced by an institution, intended for long-term preservation and broad availability. Once a repository is live, it is automatically optimised for indexing across content libraries.



In 2022, the Agency will continue to upload publications to Zenodo's '[Inclusive education](#)' community, aiming to open the door for other content libraries to index Agency publications. The Agency will monitor traffic and use of this new dissemination platform.

Updating the glossary of key terms

The Agency's [online glossary](#) has the potential to be a valuable resource in the inclusive education field. In 2021, the Agency started work on updating the glossary, aiming to coherently define key concepts in the field, reflecting the way the Agency uses them in its activities. In 2022, the update work will continue. It will be followed by efforts to increase the glossary's visibility by integrating it into project/activity pages and linking to it from various pages of the Agency website.

Websites and accessibility

The [website](#) is the hub for all Agency information. In 2022, the Agency will maintain the highest possible levels of website accessibility and usability. Search engine optimisation will continue to be a focus to ensure inclusive education content is easily discoverable.

The [Inclusive Education in Action website](#) – developed in 2018 in collaboration with UNESCO – will be updated throughout 2022 with free, open-access resources and case studies from Europe and around the world.

MyAgency – the Agency's intranet

[MyAgency](#) is the Agency's web-based platform for internal communication and activity management. Throughout 2022, new resources – including new activity areas – and opportunities for interaction will be added to MyAgency.

News and digital media

In 2022, news items will continue to be published regularly in the [News section](#) and in the Agency's quarterly [eBulletin](#).

The Agency will continue to amplify its content and drive traffic to the website through digital media extensions. This includes updating the [Agency Wikipedia article](#) to ensure it reflects the latest information and links to relevant areas of the website. It also encompasses Agency presence on [SlideShare](#) and [Google Scholar](#). New videos reflecting key Agency messages and activities will be considered for the [Agency YouTube channel](#) and website.

Information dissemination statistics

In early 2022, the Agency will draft an annual report summarising website performance statistics and the dissemination of printed and electronic materials for 2021. The report will include qualitative and quantitative findings, trend analyses and strategic recommendations to inform future dissemination.

