
European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

Cor J. W. Meijer, Director

secretariat@european-agency.org

The Agency

- An independent organisation that acts as a platform for collaboration for the ministries of education in member countries
- Our mission is to help member countries improve all learners' achievement at all levels of inclusive lifelong learning

Member countries



Currently

- 30 member countries: Austria, Belgium (Flemish and French speaking communities), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)
- Serbia is observer
- Secretariat in Odense, Denmark
- European Liaison office in Brussels, Belgium

History

- 1996 – established as an initiative of the Danish Ministry of Education following the end of the EU HELIOS II programme
- 1999 – the original member countries (15 EU member states plus Iceland and Norway) ‘took ownership’ of the Agency
- 2016 – celebrating 20 years on the path towards inclusion

Funding

The Agency is financed by:

- member countries' ministries of education
- European Commission's Erasmus+ Programme

What we do

Help member countries improve their educational policy and practice in the field of education by:

- combining the perspectives of policy, practice and research
- providing member countries and stakeholders at the European level with evidence-based information and guidance on implementing inclusive education (from why and what to how)

Position on Inclusive Education Systems

The Agency member countries' shared ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers. Therefore this vision is the focal point of all Agency work

Information dissemination via printed and digital media

www.european-agency.org

- [Project web areas](#)
- Country information pages
- [Publications](#) – reports, literature reviews, policy briefs
- [News](#), [Events](#), [Director's Blog](#), [eBulletin](#), videos on Agency [YouTube Channel](#)

Agency publications can be downloaded for free in up to 25 official languages

Agency publications



Context

- The Agency works to a 2014–2020 Multi-Annual Work Programme
- Projects and activities are identified via Agency representatives as being priority for their countries
- All Agency activities are in alignment with European Council priorities and UNCRPD objectives for education

UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2006) – Article 24 - Education

☐ States parties are requested to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels

- 174 signatories to the Convention
- 92 signatories to the Optional Protocol
- 160 ratifications of the Convention
- 92 ratifications of the Optional Protocol

Portugal ratified both the Convention and the Protocol in 2009.

Key activities

- Country policy review and analysis (CPRA) to provide information for member countries on their progress and developments with regards to inclusion
- Thematic projects focusing on priority topics identified by member countries
- Data collection and statistics (EASIE)
- Information dissemination via printed and digital media
- Organisation of special events, European Hearings, conferences, thematic seminars, workshops and meetings to raise awareness, share information and facilitate networking

Additional activities (separate funded)

- External Audit in Malta (2013–2014)
Education for All: Special Needs and Inclusive Education in Malta report
- External Audit in Iceland (2015–ongoing)
- Consultancy (UNESCO and others)

Special events

- European Parliament Hearing in Brussels 2003
- Portuguese Parliament Hearing in Portugal, Lisbon 2007
- European Parliament Hearing in Brussels, 2011
- European Hearing in Luxembourg, 2015

Main conclusions

Inclusive education is a human right!

We need teachers who have the skills, competences and attitudes in order to deal with diversity

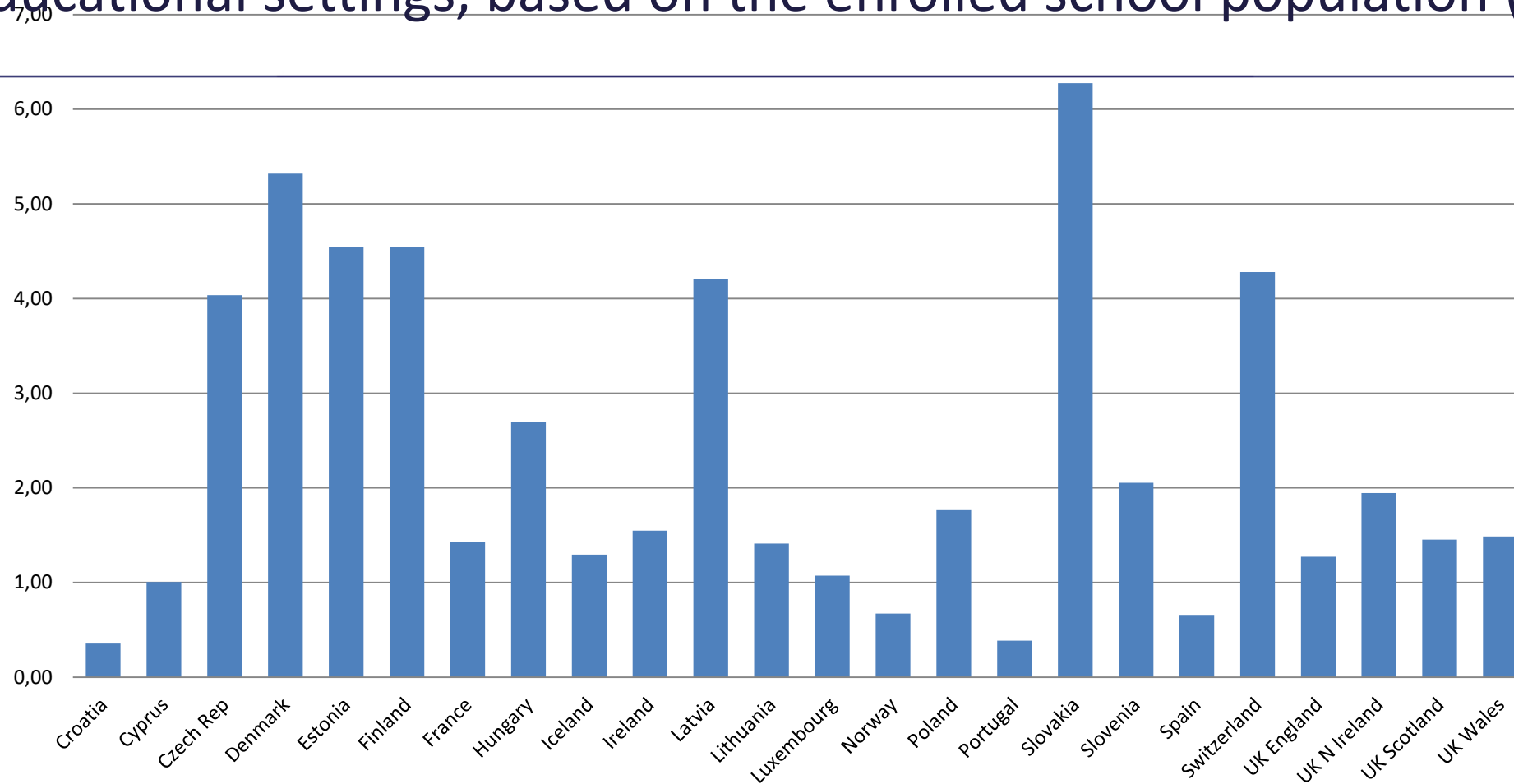
Some Recent and Current Agency projects

- ICT for Information Accessibility in Learning
- Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education
- Raising Achievement for All Learners in Inclusive Education
- Vocational Education and Training
- Inclusive Early Childhood Education
- Financing Policies for Inclusive Education Systems
- Teacher Education for Inclusion (TE4I)

Challenges for Inclusive Education

- Preparing all teachers for inclusive education (the ‘profile’)
- Identifying and meeting the needs of ‘out of school’ children
- Over 2% of pupils are being educated in separate settings (schools and classes) across Europe

Percentage of pupils with an official decision of SEN in fully separate educational settings, based on the enrolled school population (%)



Percentage of pupils with SEN in segregated settings

Up to 1.0%	1.01% - 2.0%	2.01% - 4.0%	4.01% and above
Italy	Austria	Czech Republic	Belgium (Fl)
Luxembourg	Cyprus	Finland	Belgium (Fr)
Malta	Iceland	France	Denmark
Norway	Ireland	Greece	Estonia
Portugal	Lithuania	Hungary	Germany
Spain	Poland	Netherlands	Latvia
UK (Wales)	Sweden	Slovenia	Slovakia
	UK (England)		Switzerland
	UK (N.I.)		
	UK (Scotland)		

Funding, population density and the law 'handicap of the head start'

Population density and segregation

Street lamps on gas in London/special provision (institutions) in NL

Internet in USA and Romania (cables in US)

Input/needs based funding: more segregation

- Strategic behavior (for instance with Pupil bound budgets)
- Unnecessary labeling and diagnosis

Throughput funding: more effective

Strategic behavior

- Tonsils surgeries
- Garbage policy in Zuidhorn, NL
- Special schools (or specialist services) financed through input (needs based) funding
- People/Organisations and Programmes follow the money

Progress and Opportunities:

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- A re-focussing of the role of special schools/special classes as a resource for the mainstream sector: good job, wrong place
 - End user participation in local decision-making
 - Leadership at all levels with a clear vision of inclusive education as a quality approach for all learners

Inclusive education as a means to...

... advance towards more democratic and fair societies

... learn to live together (belonging is key!)

More information

www.european-agency.org

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

Østre Stationsvej 33

DK-5000 Odense C

Denmark

secretariat@european-agency.org