



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE IN EUROPE: TRENDS, ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

A synthesis of evidence from ANED country reports and additional sources

Serge Ebersold

**(National Higher Institute for training and research on special needs education,
INSHEA)**

with Marie José Schmitt and Mark Priestley

April 2011

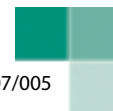


TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Glossary of key terms and abbreviations	4
	Summary and recommendations.....	6
	Recommendations	11
1	Background and purpose of the report	14
1.1	Background.....	14
1.2	Education as a key factor for inclusion	17
1.2.1	Involvement in work and society through education.....	17
1.3	A right to education based equity of access and opportunities.....	19
1.4	Aim and focus of the report	22
1.5	Structure of the report	23
2	Legal background and policy development	24
2.1	A commitment to inclusion in all EU/EEA countries	24
2.1.1	A commitment anchored in the right to education for all	24
2.2	A commitment to inclusive education rooted in an educational approach to disability.....	27
2.3	An ‘education for all’ policy that does not necessarily mean mainstream education.....	29
2.4	A commitment to inclusive education anchored in an early tracking system.....	31
2.5	An early tracking system addressing gaps in general upper secondary education.....	32
2.6	An early tracking system anchored in changes in assessment and admission rules from compulsory to post-compulsory education.....	33
2.7	A commitment to inclusion rooted in a cross-sectoral perspective	35
2.8	A commitment to inclusion that may challenge students’ rights in post-compulsory education	36
2.9	A right to education challenged by policies that fail to include transition issues.....	37
2.10	Studying abroad in higher education: a special challenge	38
2.11	Summary and conclusion	39
3	Evidence of progress towards inclusion	40
3.1	A lack of data makes evaluation of progress difficult	40
3.2	The situation has evolved in recent years	42
3.2.1	An increasing access to mainstream education.....	42
3.3	Increasing access is unequally shared among different groups.....	44
3.4	How inclusive are education systems?	45
3.4.1	Education is still implemented in both inclusive and special settings	45
3.5	Disabled students face difficulties in progressing to upper secondary education.....	46
3.6	Disabled students face difficulties in progressing to higher education	48
3.7	Progression opportunities differ among young disabled people.....	49

3.8	Education systems face difficulties in preparing young disabled people to make transitions from education to work.....	51
3.9	Young disabled people have a lower employment rate than their non-disabled peers.....	52
3.10	Young disabled people are more likely to have precarious and part-time jobs.....	53
3.11	Young disabled people are more likely to be excluded from the labour market than non-disabled youth.....	54
3.12	Summary and conclusion	55
4	Means developed for supporting the inclusion of young disabled people	57
4.1	Main support allocation principles for inclusion.....	57
4.2	Eligibility criteria require students to document their disability	58
4.3	Needs assessment procedures vary depending on the type and level of education.....	58
4.4	Effectiveness of support is often laid down in an Individual Education Plan	59
4.5	Support allocated in upper secondary education	60
4.6	Types of support allocated to students.....	60
4.7	Types of support allocated to schools.....	61
4.8	Support allocated in higher education	62
4.9	Support allocated to students.....	63
4.10	Support allocated to HEIs.....	65
4.11	Support allocated in vocational training	66
4.12	Support allocated to students.....	67
4.13	Support allocated to training centres and employers	69
4.14	Summary and conclusion	70
5	Remaining gaps and challenges to inclusion.....	71
5.1	A trend to inclusion that could be improved.....	71
5.2	Prepare young disabled people to progress in education and the labour market.....	72
5.3	Include transition issues in policies and practices.....	73
5.4	Develop data allowing for precise planning and monitoring of policies..	75
5.5	Improve the quality of support arrangements	76
5.6	Support allocated to individuals	76
5.7	Support allocated to educational institutions	78
5.8	Improve the quality of teacher training	78
5.9	Increase the quality of cooperation among stakeholders	80
5.10	Develop high quality piloting tools.....	80
6	References:.....	82
	Appendix 1	85



Glossary of key terms and abbreviations

ANED: Academic Network of European Disability experts

UNCRPD: United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

EU: European Union

OECD: organization for economic and cooperation development

EADSNE: European Agency for Development of Special Needs Education

IEP: individual education plan

Lower secondary level: corresponds to ISCED 2 level education programmes. It is designed to complete the provision of basic education and corresponds to the final years of basic education; Completion of lower secondary education coincides with the end of compulsory education. Education is normally general, but in some countries technical or vocational courses are offered at this level.

Ordinary classes: SEN students are enrolled in the same classes as their non disabled peers

Primary education: corresponds to ISCED 1 education programs. It includes the 1st years of basic education and is designed to give pupils a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics, along with an elementary understanding of other subjects such as history, geography, natural science, social science, art and music. Primary education begins generally between the ages of 5 and 7 and last 4 to 6 years.

HEIs: Higher Education Institutions

SEN and SNE: Special Educational Needs or Special Needs Education

SENCo: Special Educational Needs Coordinator

Special classes: SEN students are enrolled for the largest part of the day in separate classes located in regular schools

Special schools: SEN students are enrolled for the largest part of the day in schools that differ from, and separated from, regular schools

Upper secondary education: corresponds to ISCED 3 level education programmes. It usually begins at the end of full-time compulsory education. The age for admission to this level is typically 15 or 16. Education at ISCED level 3 may either be terminal (preparing students for direct entry into working life), or transitional (preparing for entry to tertiary education).



The qualification obtained on completion of a programme at this level is necessary (but not always sufficient) for securing access to tertiary education.

Higher education: corresponds to ISCED 5 and 6 education programs. Admission normally requires at least the satisfactory completion of ISCED level 3 or its equivalent. ISCED 5 includes programmes with an academic emphasis (ISCED 5A) that are largely theoretically based and intended to provide sufficient qualifications for gaining entry into research programmes or professions with high skills requirements, and programmes of practical or technical training (ISCED 5B) that are generally shorter than the former and prepare for entry to the labour market. ISCED 6 includes higher education programmes which lead to the award of an advanced research qualification.

VET: Vocational Education and Training



Summary and recommendations

For more than two decades there has been in Europe a common legal framework on non-discrimination with the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) article 13 in which disability has been listed together with other grounds on which it is prohibited to discriminate. This has resulted in a series of directives based on the concept of equal opportunities, enacted by equal treatment in all life domains as well as the different EU Action Plans developing education for all. These principles have provided the basis for legislation on equality of opportunities in the Member States and their commitment to inclusive education. (see chapter two) They are reflected in national laws fostering the right to education for all and national action plans and guidance for their implementation.

At the international level, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 24) strengthens the principles of non-discrimination and promotes equal opportunities in education at all levels. Sixteen European countries, among those having participated in this study have already ratified the UN Convention, including Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and UK (although the UK reserved its right to maintain special schools) The European Union concluded the convention in December 2010 and ratification is about to happen in many other countries, such as Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway and Poland.

The Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) country reports show the efforts made by countries to accommodate disabled students at all levels of education towards equal opportunities in their studies and training. They also highlight the very significant challenges and barriers that remain. To overcome such barriers, the following needs must be addressed.

A need for inclusion that mobilises additional resources both for disabled students and educational institutions

The commitment to education for all has led countries to allocate additional technical, financial and human resources aimed at empowering schools and higher education institutions to be accessible. These resources are intended for institutions to meet the requirements of disabled students for access to the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers. Such resources may, for example, be dedicated to accessibility in the sense of Article 9 of the United Nations Convention in relation to transport, built environments and information and communication technologies (ICTs). They may be also dedicated to educational purposes and may be complemented by other supports and resources provided to young disabled people for daily living. Such supports may result, therefore, from cross financing between the various ministries involved in students' education and welfare (family or health) and employment.



The commitment to education for all, and more recently a growing commitment to inclusive education, has increased opportunities in mainstream education in all countries. However, the reports (e.g. Germany, Sweden) suggest that access to mainstream education tends to be easier for children with specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia etc.) or speech impairments than for those with other impairments, especially those with cognitive impairments. In addition, most reports, with exception of Norway and Portugal, indicate that significant investment in special schools remains (e.g. Germany provides a list of ten impairments for which special schools are organised)., These are often targeted to students having a hearing, visual or intellectual impairment. Some reports (Finland and Estonia) also note that significant special school resources are dedicated to children labelled with behavioural problems, while others (e.g. Greece, Ireland, Iceland) show that special schools also exist specifically for those children having mobility problems.

A need for inclusion anchored in a common educational understanding of disability

The UN Convention provides the basis for a common framework in understanding disability. Although most countries have retained a 'special needs' approach within national policy development, this approach varies considerably from one country to another. This, in turn, makes it difficult to compare categories of special educational needs with the definitions of disability (including the broad definition in the UN Convention). Some countries (such as, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain) tend to define special educational need ('SEN') students as those with varying degrees of functional or structural impairment, who might be synonymous with disabled children while other countries (such as, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom) include migrant or ethnic minority students, those facing social disadvantages or specially gifted children within 'SEN'. Disability non-discrimination laws do not always apply to educational provision and there is clear legal definition of the concept of SEN in only very few countries (such as the United Kingdom).

A need for inclusion rooted in a reorganisation of the existing school structure

The reports show that SEN students' educational opportunities vary between countries. They may be provided mainly in the same classes as non-disabled pupils (Austria, Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania, Greece, Norway, Spain, Slovenia, Estonia, Slovenia, Portugal, Malta, Ireland, United Kingdom) or in special classes located in regular schools (Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark) or mainly in Special schools (Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Latvia, Luxembourg). They may be balanced between these options (Finland, France,).

We may then consider the education of students with SEN as taking place in three broad educational frameworks within the European Economic Area.



A first group of countries tend to enrol disabled students in mainstream education, within inclusive settings or in special classes, while special schools remain only for the education of particular groups of children (e.g. those with severe impairments).

A second group continues to include special schools as an integral part of their educational provision, and disabled students may often be enrolled in them. A third group of countries has sought to transform their special schools into resource centres aimed at supporting mainstream schools in implementing inclusive education.

A need for inclusion that is challenging for young disabled people

The reports show that transition to post-compulsory education is problematic for young disabled people in all European countries. They have much lower opportunities in transition to upper secondary education, as evidenced by the restrictions described in the reports and in the limited existing data that allows for comparison of the numbers of SEN pupils enrolled in lower and upper secondary education.

The reports also suggest that access to mainstream education is more difficult at upper secondary school level, especially in countries where disabled students are channelled towards special vocational training centres (as in Austria or Germany) or to courses in further education institutions (as in the United Kingdom). They tend also to have lower opportunities in progressing and graduating within upper secondary education and face difficulties in accessing vocational training opportunities to empower them professionally.

Young disabled people have fewer chances than non-disabled youth to enter and progress within higher education. They are less likely to enrol in professionally promising courses or to graduate, and they are more likely to drop out after the first year and to have erratic and longer pathways within higher education.

Access to employment is challenging for young disabled people compared to non-disabled youth. Their employment rate tends to be much lower and they are over-exposed to unemployment and to exclusion from the labour market. Those accessing employment have more precarious and part-time jobs than the general population and may therefore be at risk of poverty.

These challenges tend to be particularly strong for youth with cognitive impairments, with multiple impairments or with mental health conditions. In those countries providing data on ethnic minorities, it seems that young disabled people coming from migrant or minority families are more likely to be excluded both from mainstream education and from employment than their disabled peers in the ethnic majority.



A need for inclusion that addresses existing gaps and barriers

Despite the existence of a European legal framework on equality of opportunities and non-discrimination, implementing 'education for all' is only at its very beginning and the real efficiency of the results is difficult to measure. Disabled children and young people still face many barriers to inclusion in education and training at all levels.

The reports show that some of the challenges may be attributed to a legal framework that tends to foster early tracking beyond compulsory education and may hinder young disabled people's access to general upper secondary education and higher education and encompasses discriminatory barriers. For example, in some countries, assistive equipment for educational purposes may cease at the age of 16. Certain groups of disabled students (e.g. youth with intellectual disabilities or mental health conditions) may face additional barriers in transition to upper secondary education compared to other groups. Many reports stress in addition, a lack of physical access hindering those with mobility impairments from accessing education facilities.

The challenges faced by young disabled people may also be attributed to education systems that, despite the progress made, fail in providing them with the skills required to progress beyond compulsory education and to become employable. In many countries, young disabled people do not access vocational training courses that enable them to meet the requirements of the labour market. In most countries, mainstream teachers are not adequately prepared to adapt their teaching practices to disabled students' needs. They may not be supported appropriately by assistant teachers or appropriate methodological tools. According to many reports, the supports needed by disabled students are not always allocated with sufficient human support time or do not allow for high quality education, especially for those with more severe impairments.

The reports also show that the challenges faced by young disabled people may be attributed to policies that pay too little attention to the transition between different education levels and, to a lesser extent, into work. Few countries (e.g. Denmark and the United Kingdom) require secondary schools to include a transition plan in students' individual education plan (IEP) based on individuals' needs, strengths, skills, and interests and outlining their goals beyond upper secondary education, and the support and services required to meet those goals (OECD, 2011). In most countries involved in this report, educational institutions fail to provide adequate guidance to disabled students during transition periods. Many reports highlight a lack of synergies between the various stakeholders involved in the education process due to compartmentalisation of responsibilities between the different education levels.

The challenges faced by young disabled people may furthermore result from a lack of tools for planning and monitoring policies.



While existing data may provide information on the number of students having special educational needs at compulsory level, on their type of schooling, and in some cases by gender or age, most countries do not have reliable and internationally comparable data to identify the situation of young disabled people compared to their non-disabled peers, in terms of access and learning outcomes. Most countries are also unable to identify the pathways followed by young disabled people or the different factors favouring or hindering transition from one education level to another, and into work. In addition, the data available in most countries do not account adequately for gender, socio-economic background, and ethnic origin. Policy monitoring and evaluation is also impeded by a lack of data on the effectiveness of allocated resources.

Similarly, there is a lack of tools for planning and monitoring students' progress. In many countries, the weakness of assessment procedures precludes high quality needs assessment and may foster inequalities among disabled students, especially those with severe impairments or from migrant families. Although most countries require education providers to establish Individual Education Plans (IEP), many stakeholders do not develop high quality IEPs or action plans and lack tools enabling them to plan and monitor their strategies effectively.

These challenges underline how laws alone are insufficient to produce an effective commitment to education for all. They also indicate the limits of inclusion in any system that seeks to include disabled children without the necessary changes to its organisation. Efforts towards inclusion in the mainstream are mainly made for those who 'fit' within the system as it stands.

The reports show that answers have been found to many of the challenges of including disabled children and young people who need more time, special devices or adaptations for learning and examinations. Much good practice has been developed in this sense. However, States still face difficulties in developing education systems that combine effectiveness and equity to meet the great diversity of educational needs and to ensure that curricula are relevant to each learner in order to include, effectively, *all* children and to develop each child's personality to its fullest potential. Education is still provided, more or less, as a collective form of training, within a common curriculum at each age level. This approach to education has always been challenged by diversity and only very few measures have been taken, mainly in the form of exceptional cases. Children experiencing educational difficulties (migrant children, children with a difficult social background, disabled children) were a problem from the very beginning of compulsory education, long before they were identified as having Special Education Needs (SEN). Indeed, the whole parallel system of 'special' education has been developed precisely because diversity could not be accommodated within the regular system, especially at higher levels of education.



Recommendations

The recommendations aim at supporting inclusion policies, requiring education systems to build both on general human rights to education and to tailor practices to the particular context of disability.

As such, governments should:

- Prohibit all forms of discrimination and require educational institutions to draw up a specific annual action plan for the equality of disabled students describing aims followed, means invested and improvements expected.
- Foster education policies that combine effectiveness and equity at all levels of education to prevent drop out and foster success.
- Include transition issues in their education policies to ensure effective pathways from one educational level to another, from special schools to mainstream schools and from education to work.
- Provide the financing mechanisms necessary for effective and high quality education, transition opportunities and the support of innovative practices.
- Build reliable indicators and statistical data to support effective planning and monitoring of education and training policies.
- Facilitate local synergies between stakeholders in the education system, including the employment sector, the welfare sector and the health sector for strengthening inter-institutional complementarities.
- Improve initial training and continuing professional development for teachers and other professionals involved in the education process so as to provide them with appropriate methodological tools and supports.
- Actively involve young disabled people, their parents and representative groups at all levels of educational policy making (both local and national)
- Ensure accessibility in a preventive manner including to teaching material and systems

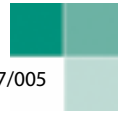
The European Commission should support countries by:

- Developing awareness campaigns concerning the good practice that exists in transforming segregated educational systems towards inclusive education in schools and Universities (e.g. by initiating an Accessible European University award similar to the accessible cities award).
- Promoting programmes, schemes and services that foster the transfer of good practice in supporting successful transition to post-compulsory education levels and from education to work (e.g. there would be scope to exploit the Leonardo program for staff mobility and European Social Funds for national project initiatives).
- Promoting programmes to share good practice and expertise in assistive educational tools and devices, including ICT-based learning opportunities (e.g. within the Tempus, Grundtvig and Transversal lifelong learning programs)

- Supporting the definition of quality indicators for inclusion at all levels of education within European research programs (e.g. by commissioning a review study of educational inclusion indicators, or via the European Agency for Special Needs Education).
- Promoting teacher education and training programmes including inclusive education issues and target the need for disability awareness and training amongst non-qualified and teaching assistant staff (e.g. via the Comenius, Erasmus and Leonardo programs for staff mobility and curriculum development). There is scope for a review study of the levels of qualification and training amongst learning support assistants in different countries.
- Promoting the learning and teaching of sign language at all levels of education (e.g. by ensuring the official recognition of sign language in EU funded programmes for language learning, including Comenius and the key activity projects, networks, online course developments and other initiatives supported in the transversal program)
- Promoting education and training programmes empowering all stakeholders involved in the education process (e.g. educational social workers, therapists and physicians as well as teachers) to contribute actively to the implementation of inclusive education (e.g. Leonardo programs could support innovation transfer in this area or foster training courses that are transversal to all stakeholder).
- Mainstreaming disability equality concerns and monitoring in the main programmes and initiatives of the European Union on education, training and lifelong learning (e.g. mainstreaming guidance from the Disability High Level Group to the open method of coordination associated with Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training 'ET2020').

Such actions should encourage policy makers in the education, training and lifelong learning fields not only to promote opportunities for access to education and training, but to highlight the role of education as an enabler of full participation, equality and well-being in all areas of community life. This step, underpinning Article 24 of the UN Convention and the basis of equality for all, has yet to be achieved in all European countries. These recommendations further invite an extension of efforts made to improve inclusion opportunities from the compulsory level to the post-compulsory level, in line with EU strategy on lifelong learning.

- They highlight the need to improve the quality of inclusive education practices and outcomes at primary and lower secondary level towards the goal of maximising opportunities to meet the entry requirements of upper secondary level and the labour market. Particular attention should be paid to segregated systems of schooling that limit or prevent higher level transitions through barriers in their institutional, curriculum and examination system.
- They emphasize the need to increase the capacity of upper secondary schools to cope with diversity of educational needs. Particular attention should be drawn to the transitional barriers of entry to upper secondary level schooling and to the transition opportunities into higher education.



- They underscore the need to improve the quality of access and success within higher education, where inclusive practices and support for disabled students remain extremely variable and where universities are often exempt from national non-discrimination and accessibility policies applied to vocational training sectors.



1 Background and purpose of the report

1.1 Background

The Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) was established in 2008 by the European Commission to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy unit. As part of its annual work programme, ANED produces thematic reports on selected topics of significance to European policy making. In 2010 ANED commissioned country reports on national policies and implementation evidence on access, participation and outcomes in education and training for young disabled people.

Fostering the inclusive participation of persons with disabilities and working towards full enjoyment of equal fundamental rights is a core objective of the European Commission. European strategy and co-operation recognizes that 'education and training are essential to the development and success of today's knowledge society and economy'¹. The Lisbon Strategy underlined this, and there is evidence of policy linkage between employment, disability and education in some countries (including evidence from previous ANED country reports on employment and social inclusion). Shared objectives and a framework for co-operation between countries were agreed by education ministers under the title Education and Training 2010 (including benchmarks, reporting processes and exchanges of good practice). The Education and Training 2010 work programme (now 'ET2020') included a commitment to ensure that European Union's education and training systems became 'accessible to all'. In particular, Objective 2.3 (Supporting active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion), noted that:

A basic principle that needs to be reinforced is that all citizens should have equal access to education and training. This requires that in Member states special attention is paid to supporting vulnerable groups and individuals, particularly those with disabilities or learning difficulties.

It is most relevant, therefore, to ask how far this has been achieved in 2010.

A new strategic framework for European co-operation in education and training was adopted by the Council in May 2009 (see, for example, the Council Conclusions on a strategic framework for European co-operation in education and training 'ET 2020'²) and the 2008 Joint Council/Commission Report on the implementation of the Education & Training 2010 work programme³. The main points addressed in this latter document represent real challenges when considering education for disabled children and young people, including:

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28_en.htm

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:119:0002:0010:EN:PDF>

³ http://ec.europa.eu/education/pdf/doc66_en.pdf

- The need for increased numbers of staff to support inclusive learning in pre-primary and primary schools.
- The need to adapt inclusive learning programmes for children and students from different cultural backgrounds.
- The need to validate the non-formal and informal learning achievements of those disabled people whose learning is not acknowledged within formal qualification frameworks?
- The need to prepare young disabled people to enter the labour market in a knowledge based economy.
- The need to provide greater assurance about the relevance of vocational training provided to young disabled people?

In addition, 'youth' has become more important as a European policy concept. A European Youth Pact⁴ was adopted in March 2005, linking youth concerns with the Employment Strategy, the Social Inclusion Strategy and the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme. A new Youth Strategy was adopted in 2009, following extensive consultation.

Within the post-Lisbon Strategy⁵ (Europe 2020) there is great concern to reduce the number of young people leaving education and training, and to improve their level of qualification. This new European strategy for jobs and growth aims at:

- increasing access to employment of young people and low skilled workers,
- improving education levels by reducing school drop-out rates and by increasing completion at higher education level,
- promoting social inclusion, in particular through the reduction of poverty.

Within Europe 2020, '*Youth on the move*' will be a major new initiative to '*raise the overall quality of all levels of education and training in the EU, combining both excellence and equity*' (p. 11). This includes both formal and informal learning, and is particularly concerned with reducing youth unemployment. There has been, however, no mention of disability in this discussion.

The European Disability Action Plan 2003-2010 aimed at mainstreaming disability issues within all relevant EU policies and the new EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 emphasises equal access to quality education and lifelong learning as key factors in enabling full participation in society. While the Member States retain responsibility for the organisation and delivery of access to education, the EU has an important role to play in promoting inclusive learning and mobility for students and educators.

⁴ Annex 1 of Presidency Conclusions of the European Council, Brussels, 22 and 23 March 2005 (7619/05)

⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/>



However, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) provides the clearest reference point. The Preamble to the CRPD recognises the importance of education.

Article 3 provides a list of principles underpinning the Convention. It is important in the framework of the present report to keep in mind the principle quoted in Article 3 h) of 'Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities'.

Article 4(i) on general obligations provides that the Parties to the Convention shall undertake: 'To promote the training of professionals and staff working with persons with disabilities in the rights recognized in the present Convention so as to better provide the assistance and service guaranteed by those rights'.

Article 5 on equality and non-discrimination establishes a clear link between promoting equality, eliminating discrimination and the necessity to 'ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided'.

Article 8b (Awareness Raising) requires Parties to encourage 'an attitude of respect for the rights of persons with disabilities' at all levels of the education system. Article 24 then deals with the issue of Education in detail. It requires Parties to 'ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:

- The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
- The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
- Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.'

It also goes somewhat further in requiring that persons with disabilities:

- '...are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability...'
- '...can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live'
- are provided with 'reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements'
- and receive this support 'within the general education system...'
- '...in environments that maximise academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.'

They should also be provided with reasonable accommodation so that they 'are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others'.



These Treaty obligations present very significant challenges to individual States and to the European Union, particularly during a period of economic crisis. They provide the benchmark and aspirations against which to evaluate progress that has been made so far and gaps that remain.

Reflecting on these challenges in its 2009 Statement on Inclusive Education⁶ the European Disability Forum emphasised the need for ‘inclusive education’ to be more widely understood as a shared concept, while highlighting the great diversity of arrangements to be found in different European countries.

‘There are different pathways to achieve inclusive education which should be developed within and according to the general education system, traditions and cultures in each country, without any compromises with the principle of equal opportunities’ (p. 4).

Drawing on the ANED country reports and other published sources, this report aims to synthesise existing knowledge about these diverse national systems with evidence of their progress towards the full participation and equality of young disabled people in education and training.

1.2 Education as a key factor for inclusion

1.2.1 Involvement in work and society through education

Developing an inclusive education system is not only a matter of right. Access to education offers a key means to put persons with disabilities on an equal footing with non-disabled persons, to promote diversity within schools and to create social bonds between persons with and without disabilities. It is also a means of promoting education systems with an emphasis on achieving a common learning environment guaranteeing the presence, participation and achievement of equal outcomes for all learners, including those with disabilities (Quinn, Ebersold, 2008).

Equal access to inclusive education in the mainstream improves the employment and work prospects of young adults with disabilities (Articles 27 and 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities). Experience and data suggest that those who are enrolled in mainstream education have better academic results than those schooled in special classes or, a fortiori, in special schools and, therefore, may have better chances in accessing subsequent employment. This is exemplified in systems where special schooling limits the possibility of equal qualifications. For example, the German country report indicates that, in 2006, more than 77% of all special school leavers did not have a school leaving qualification when they finished their school education whereas only 7.9% of those enrolled in regular schools were in such a situation.

⁶ <http://cms.horus.be/files/99909/MediaArchive/library/EDF-Statement-Inclusive-Education.doc>



The Polish report shows that, in 2008, more than 95% of mainstream secondary school graduates who sat matriculation exam also passed, whereas in special secondary schools only 67.4% did so.

Those with higher education have better employment opportunities than those who leave school at the end of compulsory education (OECD, 2008).

Persons with a higher education degree also have better chances to maintain their employability and tend to be more able to cope with transition periods due to precarious job opportunities. Higher education militates against withdrawal from the labour market and exposure to the most severe forms of marginalisation and poverty (OECD, 2006; OECD, 2008a; Eurostat, 2008).

Access to education also increases individuals' ability to be included into society. Young adults with disabilities accessing mainstream education have better community participation and closer personal relationships than those who do not enjoy such access (Newman et al, 2009). Those who completed upper secondary education are also more likely to gain a satisfactory level of residential independence, a parental status and to be engaged in community activities that can provide opportunities to meet people with like interests, to develop new skills, to experience the satisfaction of shared accomplishments and to make a contribution to the community (Townsend & al., 2010). They are also less likely to experience negative social experiences resulting from risk of victimisation or becoming offenders (Bearman and Moody 2004; Crosnoe and Needham 2004; Fraser 1997; Rodgers and Rose 2002; Smith et al. 1995).

The chances of transiting to tertiary education are better when students are schooled in a regular class than when they are not. Those schooled in a regular class are more likely than those schooled in a special school or class to find themselves in courses of study conducive to academic success and social or professional inclusion (Burchardt, 2005, Wagner, 2006). Students who receive appropriate instruction in a regular class are keener to go to school, and perform better, than those confined to a special class or inadequately instructed in a regular class (OECD, 1999). They are also more likely to feel that they are in good health and to have the relational capacities needed to interact satisfactorily with their classmates. They are more likely to acquire social capital that facilitates their employment, since school gives them the chance to forge lasting bonds of friendship on which they can build social relations that will be particularly useful in their professional and social life.

As with access to health, access to inclusive education has a protective effect against many of the risk factors that young disabled people face. It provides skills and competences for facing common risks in adult life (unemployment, poverty), coping with the challenges and requirements of a changing labour market, leading productive and independent lives and being socially included in all domains of society. It is, therefore, of key importance to implement education and training policies that move, increasingly, towards self-determination for disabled people, away from a care or dependence approach towards one based on empowerment.



1.3 A right to education based equity of access and opportunities

The general and universal right to education has been well established for some time. In recent years the main reference point to inform this debate has been the UNESCO Salamanca Statement⁷ (arising from the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education, in which 92 governments participated). The Statement affirmed international agreement on the principle of 'education for all' but also emphasised the principle that disabled children should be taught in the same mainstream schools as their non-disabled neighbourhood peers. Thus:

Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

Similar principles had been outlined in the 1993 United Nations Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, in which Rule 6 urged States to 'recognize the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities, in integrated settings'⁸. It did, however, acknowledge the existence of separate schooling where, 'the general school system does not yet adequately meet the needs of all persons with disabilities' (provided that the purpose of such schooling was focused on 'preparing students for education in the general school system', or the culturally sensitive initial instruction of specific communication skills amongst deaf and deaf/blind students).

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the most recent enunciation of the general human right to education in the specific context of disability is Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which is now central to ensuring and promoting education for all at international level. It requires ratifying Parties to foster an equitable education system enabling persons with disabilities to access to general education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning 'without discrimination and on an equal basis with others'. Education systems are therefore required to:

- Ensure persons with disabilities' access to 'inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary compulsory education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live';
- Provide 'reasonable accommodation of the individual's educational needs';
- Provide adequate support 'within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education';

⁷ http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF

⁸ <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dissre00.htm>



- Develop 'effective individualized support measures...in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion'.
- Take appropriate measures enabling persons with disabilities to 'learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community'.

Article 24 of the UNCRPD requires, therefore, education systems to be not only inclusive but also to accommodate each person's educational needs. It aims at removing those barriers that exclude or otherwise marginalize children and young disabled people and deprive them from their right to education.

Implementing the right to education demands an effective education system able to create educational environments sufficiently flexible to adapt to the diversity of educational needs. This requires a legal framework committing schools to be receptive to diversity and to consider each student's needs and outcomes, regardless of his or her circumstances, social origin or ethnic group. It demands the human, financial and technical resources to support students in meeting academic, social and professional requirements and empowering educational institutions to become pedagogically accessible to the diversity of needs. It demands schools to include disability issues in their policies and action plans, assessing pupils individually to identify the needs that have to be met and developing outcome-based curricula promoting a high level of adaptability, organisation and support (OECD, 1999).

Implementing the right to education requires a focus on individuals' educational needs instead on their inabilities. This allows for referring disability, as suggested *inter alia* by the Salamanca Statement, to the ability of the education system to meet the diversity of educational profiles within the school system (UNESCO, 1994). It is an approach that considers that all students may have an educational need in their career and may require some support to be successful in school, independently from the existence of impairment. It requires schools to be more receptive to diversity of educational needs and profiles and to commit themselves to become pedagogically, socially and physically accessible. By contrast to this educational approach, a diagnostic approach relates disability to individuals' inabilities and associates school difficulties with the latter. It does not present diversity as a core issue for the education system and access to education then depends on individuals' ability to adapt to the system and to cope with existing norms. Access to education depends less on schools' policy than on teachers' goodwill and sense of initiative. Supports are seen less as an opportunity for students' success than as a means to solve the problems students with difficulties cause to schools (Ebersold, 2008).

Implementing the right to education calls for a cross-sectoral perspective allowing for various dimensions to be taken into account and combining the inclusive design for all approach with specific assistive solutions across policy areas.



Access opportunities in education often depend on synergies developed through co-operation between the education system, social services, and health services (since pedagogical, social and physical accessibility issues often lie with the education system while the provision of supports to compensate for disability often falls to the health and/or social care sector). It depends also on co-operation developed between stakeholders in different territorial jurisdictions (national, regional and local levels).

Implementing the right to inclusive education demands a longitudinal perspective, taking into account students' transition opportunities between the different levels and sectors of education. Many disabled students 'fail' or are disadvantaged in shifting from primary to secondary education, from lower secondary education to upper secondary education, or from secondary to tertiary education (OECD, 2007; Ebersold, 2010). Progress in education requires firm transition links between different education levels, preparing students to meet new demands and allowing for provision of continuity in support. It necessitates also bridges between general and vocational education courses.

Implementing the right to education entails a life course perspective, taking into account the specific challenges young adults with disabilities face during transition into adulthood. Transition into adulthood is a difficult time in general, since young people face new roles and responsibilities. For young disabled people, there may be additional changes in the demands placed on education institutions at higher level, since the provision of support often ceases to be the responsibility of the school and depends on the young adult's ability to disclose their impairment/disability, to articulate their needs and claim the implementation of their rights. Transiting to adulthood may also mean a change of definitions or approaches to disability: in many countries, disability ceases to be defined in terms of educational standards and is related to employment standards. In Norway, for example, a disabled child or adolescent is defined as one with an educational need indicated by the distance separating that person from the norms of society, which must be bridged by special education; for adults, the definition relates to a permanent incapacity to meet personal needs, induced by a reduced capacity for work or by a health problem that precludes employment. As indicated in the United Kingdom report, 'educational need' is no longer a formal administrative category once young disabled people leave school and those with learning difficulties, behavioural disorders or language problems may no longer be entitled to the same support they previously benefitted from in school.

Ensuring that young disabled people leave education with qualifications appropriate for the labour market is another important factor in implementing the right to inclusive education. It is an important principle of inclusion that children and young disabled people should have equal opportunity to study towards the same routes of matriculation and qualification as non-disabled young people (so that they are not later denied the possibility to make transitions into mainstream vocational and higher education).



Difficulties in finding initial employment tend to overexpose them to unemployment or inactivity and, therefore, to foster inflows into non-contributory benefit systems that tend, in many cases, to deprive them of participation into society and condemn them to prolonged exclusion (OECD, 2003).

In so far, implementing the right to inclusive education requires policies and strategy for transforming educational systems towards a universalized and holistic approach to quality education for all that accommodates positively the difference of disability. Beyond access and academic achievement within the educational system, there is a need to include in quality indicators the kinds of opportunities given to young adults with disabilities to transit from a rather secure and biographically standardised context to a world of choice/risk where individuals must choose and plan their own future and take a greater role in managing their social inclusion as adults.

1.4 Aim and focus of the report

The aim of the report is to examine if the commitment made within the Lisbon strategy to ensure that EU education and training systems are 'accessible to all' is being achieved, in terms of educational opportunities and outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities. It aims to:

- Review the national legal frameworks for education and training
- Evaluate national policy development on education of young adults with disabilities and their impact in terms of employment
- Share examples of good practice
- Provide the Commission with useful evidence in support of future co-ordination and development.
- Make recommendations to the Commission on priorities for future policy and research development.

The report is based upon country reports prepared by ANED's national correspondents in response to a template of questions, developed in consultation with Commission staff.

The template addressed the following general issues, which are elaborated in Annex 1:

- The general legal and policy framework for inclusive education policies,
- Information and evidence about their implementation,
- Details of the supports allocated to disabled learners and students,
- Evidence of their effectiveness
- Examples of good practices (e.g. in the support available to disabled university students),
- The provision of segregated and mainstream vocational training options,
- Forms of financial assistance, personal assistance and arrangements for the provision of assistive technology for individual learners/trainees).



The country reports varied in their scope, length and focus on the different questions posed (e.g. dependent upon the availability of published data, or on the type of provision available in each country). Reports submitted by mid august 2010 were included in the preparation of this synthesis report, and include Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom. The full reports of these countries, as well as those received after mid August 2010, are published on the ANED website⁹.

Building upon the questions directed to the national experts, this synthesis report also considers evidence other published studies and significant sources of relevance. It includes, for example, data and information provided by the European Agency for Development of Special Needs Education (EADSNE), the OECD and from previous ANED reports .

1.5 Structure of the report

The synthesis report provides a guide to reading the ANED country reports and aims to examine the transition opportunities that young disabled people have for tertiary education and to employment. Indirectly, it also provides information on the impact of inclusive education policies on professional and social prospects.

It does not pretend to reproduce the full descriptions contained in the country reports. It sets out a more comparative presentation of education opportunities for young adults with disabilities with an emphasis on: developments in the most recent years; strategies developed to support students and schools; their effectiveness in terms of access to education; success in educational achievement; transition opportunities. It is structured to facilitate consistency and cross-referencing with the national reports, in relation to specific sections, as follows:

- Legal background and policy developments (chapter 2)
- Evidence of progress towards inclusion (chapter 3)
- Means of supporting the inclusion of young disabled people (chapter 4)
- Remaining gaps and challenges (chapter 5)

⁹ www.disability-europe.net



2 Legal background and policy development

This chapter reviews the extent to which states have included access to education, especially mainstream education, in their national legislative and policy framework. It considers also the factors fostering or impeding the implementation of these policies.

2.1 A commitment to inclusion in all EU/EEA countries

2.1.1 A commitment anchored in the right to education for all

Change in the education laws of most European countries had begun by the end of last century or the early years of the present century. This change was based increasingly on equality principles adopted in the EU and national legislation to include non-discrimination provisions. These principles needed to be reflected in the area of education and preparing youth to their future active participation in the European society. It should be noted that, whereas ‘the right to education’ has long been written into many national constitutions, it should read now as the right to education ‘for all’. Most countries have translated this broadening of the scope of education to all citizens into their laws according to their own way of organisation at federal or regional level.

Recent evolutions show that the position of law-makers, when dealing with the education of disabled people, has differed according to their starting point or general legal framework. Some, as in countries with case-law, started from general non-discrimination laws, sometimes from specific disability non-discrimination laws as in the UK Disability Discrimination Act. Others started from existing laws dealing already with educational opportunities for disabled people, as in a number of countries with continental law, where special education acts had been passed in the 1960s and 1970s. According to these two different approaches, new education laws have acquired diverse features despite their common roots in international Declarations, Treaties, and Plans (e.g. Salamanca Statement 1994, UN Convention 2006, EU Disability Action Plans).

As shown by the table below, at the time of writing this report (August 2010), most countries (with the exception of Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway and Poland) had ratified the UN convention on the Rights of disabled people while the United Kingdom had reserved the right for disabled children to be educated outside their local community where more appropriate education provision is available elsewhere. Lawmakers and organisations of disabled people were actively involved in the drafting process of this Convention at the same time as new laws on education were also proposed for adoption in many countries.

Laws, as Aristotle asserted, are built on two main rationales: speculative reasons, on the basis of common principles, and practical reasons, leading towards adopting precise measures for the implementation of those principles. In Europe, the principle of education for all irrespective of age, gender, ethnic origin, health condition or disability has been adopted everywhere while practical measures are focused on facilitating education for those who are facing difficulties in attending school and learning on the same path as other children or young adults.

The reports all refer to the general framework of each country's constitution, relevant acts and regulations and evidence the slow evolution towards inclusive education. This table shows inter alia that the reports referred less specifically to laws or regulations for upper secondary education (e.g. laws may cover schooling of all levels, with separate laws governing post-schooling levels). As will be shown later, despite their relative invisibility in law, access to and transitions from upper secondary schooling present very specific and significant challenges to the principle of education for all and therefore merit particular attention.

Table 1: legal initiatives taken by EU/EEA countries

Country	UN CRPD	Right to education for all	Act on equal opportunity	Education Act comp. School	Vocation Training Act	General upper secondary	Higher Education Act	Adult Education	National Action
AT	X	Constit.	2006	1993-1996	2003/ 2004		2002		X
CZ	X	Constit. 92	X	2004	2004/ 2005		1998	2006	X
CY	not rat.			2001					
DK	X	1958	1980	X	1994		2004	1994	X
EE	X Not ratified	Constit. 92		1993- 1999	Decree 2006		strategy 2006- 2015	Plan 2009- 2013	X
FI	X Not ratified	Constit.99	X	1998	1986-87			1988/8 9	X
DE	X	Constit.49	2002	1994	2006		1994		X
EL	X	2008	2005	Bill 2010	1998-2007		2007- 2009	2005	X
HU	X	Constit.49	Act 1998	1998/99	no info.		2005	2001	X
IS	X Not ratified		1992	2008		2008	2008	march 2010	X
IE	X Not ratified	Constit.	2000- 2004	2004 deferred	strat.2004		Plan 2008- 2013	Plan 2007- 2016	X
LV	X	Constit.92	1998	1999				Plan 2007- 2013	X

LT	?			1998-2006	X	X	X	X	X
MT	X Not ratified	Constit.64	2000	1988/2006			2002/2007		X
NL	not rat.	Constit.	2003/2009	prepared					X
NO	X Not ratified	1960	2009	1998			2005	2005/2008	X
PL	not rat.	Constit. 97		1991 + draft	Rehab.1997		2005	2004	X
PT	X	since 1986		2008/2009	X		X quotas		X
SK	X	Constit.92		1998/2008	X		2002	2009	X
SI	X	Constit. 91		2004/2006					X
ES	X	Constit. 85		1978/2008	2006/2007		2007		X
SE	X	1985	X	1985 newbill			2001	1992	X
UKX.....	1944	1995 DDA	1993/1996	1998			X	X

Source: authors' compilation out of the ANED reports 2010

Specific reference and web links to the sources of national legislation are provided in each of the country reports, together with summary details and critical commentary in the text of each country report (not all national legislation is publicly available in English translation).

One practical reason guiding lawmakers when drafting laws on compulsory education is that education 'for all' does mean in our countries education with one's peers, leading to fostering inclusive education. Another practical reason that illuminates the way this should be achieved is stated in Article 7 of the UN Convention (in addition to Article 24), which stresses the principles that should underpin *such commitment*. It reads:

- *State Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children.*
- *In all actions concerning children with disabilities, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.....*

Other practical reasons guide the duration of education. Laws may provide, for example, some additional time for disabled students. In post-compulsory education this duration may be extended for those who had to interrupt their studies because of impairment or illness. For example, several country reports mention allowances for additional years of schooling for disabled children, and the opportunity for additional time for specific learning tasks (e.g. for student examinations). However, such provisions tend to relate only to illness or impairment as causes rather than to disabling means and practices, which may, in some cases, create time barriers contrary to the principle of equality of access to education for all, especially when lack of resources and supports hamper a disabled student's course of study.



Examples of this are mentioned in the reports, such as books not available in Braille, no sign interpretation, and so on.

Laws in support of compulsory education include a broad number of support measures in integrated settings for disabled students, such as: (a) Alterations to school building facilities, (b) Special adaptations to the curriculum, (c) Additional support provided by specialist teachers; 4) Special teaching methods and materials, (d) Reduced class sizes, (e) Special arrangements for evaluation or progress through education

In all countries laws also provide that compulsory schooling should be made available, as far as possible, for children who have to be educated at home and for those who remain in long-stay hospitals or institutions. This observation underlines the necessary commitment not to exclude those children whose schooling has been interrupted by illness, treatment or detention.

2.2 A commitment to inclusive education rooted in an educational approach to disability

Following the Salamanca statement, most countries shifted from a diagnostic approach to disability, emphasizing what disabled children and young adults cannot do, to an educational perspective that relates disability to the ability of education systems to place every student, regardless of his or her particular circumstances, on an equal footing in terms of access, course of study, and outcomes. Students are consequently identified as 'students with special educational needs' (SEN) although countries may give to this concept quite different meanings. Some countries (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain) tend to describe SEN students as children who have a light, mild or severe functional or structural impairment and who might be more generally called disabled children. As indicated by the Austrian report (p.24), *'special educational needs are established if a child is physically or mentally disabled and, as a result, the school lacks the ability to teach the child in primary schools, general secondary schools or pre-vocational schools without special education assistance'*.

Other countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, the Slovak Republic and the UK) have a much broader definition of SEN, focusing on educational support to overcome learning difficulties and which includes migrant students, those facing social disadvantages and, in some countries, being specially gifted. For example, according to the Finnish report (p. 10), *'special support (Criteria of Basic Education 2004) is required in learning when pupils' growth, development and learning conditions are assessed as being diminished. This includes pupils whose learning and schooling conditions are difficult because of their emotional and social problems and who need targeted support.'*

These distinctions underline the definitional difficulty in comparing national data and policy measures concerned with SEN and with disability in education, particularly in schools.

Although most countries use the SEN qualification in their laws, there is no legal definition of the SEN notion except in very few countries like the UK where, under the 1996 Education Act, SEN was defined as follows: *'a child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her'*. SEN, from the perspective of the individual, is a description of a learner's needs in complying with the obligation to go to school and to follow an official curriculum.

Table 2: Approaches to children with SEN in different countries

	Disabilities	Disability and learning difficulties	Disability, learning difficulties and social disadvantages	others
Austria			X	
Czech Rep.			x	Gifted children
Cyprus	Not available in report	Not available in report	Not available in report	Not available in report
Denmark	X			
Estonia			X	
Finland			X	
Germany			X	
Greece	X			
Hungary	X			
Iceland		X		
Ireland	X			
Latvia	X			
Lithuania	X			
Malta	X			
Netherlands		X		
Norway		X		
Poland			X	
Portugal		X		
Slovak Rep			X	
Slovenia	X			
Spain	X			
Sweden			X	
UK			X	

Source: authors' compilation of the ANED country reports based on OECD's resource based disability approach. (OECD, 2005; Ebersold & Evans, 2008)



The approach to special educational need (SEN) is used by governments to define eligibility criteria for identifying groups of pupils for whom additional measures have to be taken and additional resources allocated. It is also used to establish a series of obligations for schools, such as developing and following an Individual Education Plan (IEP), providing additional teaching and asking for additive financial resources for so doing.

This educationalist approach may have the effect of expanding the number of disabled students identified (if SEN data is used as proxy for disability). Indeed, those countries having adopted an SEN perspective including students with an impairment, those with learning difficulties and those belonging to ethnic minorities or socially disadvantaged groups tend to count many more students with 'disabilities' than countries using a more restrictive approach to disability (OECD, 2007).

Recently, the SEN approach has been questioned in Finland, during the drafting process of a new Education Law where it has been proposed to abolish the qualification as a student with SEN so as to avoid labelling people. Similar consideration is to be found in the reports of Iceland and Sweden, with both countries considering that such practice has weakened the principle of education for all. Sometimes it is difficult to harmonize principles with practical measures.

2.3 An 'education for all' policy that does not necessarily mean mainstream education

The commitment to education for all is not necessarily linked with obligatory mainstream education for all disabled students. Most countries have shifted, or aim to shift, to inclusive education by reducing the number of special schools, as for example in Norway where disabled students are supposed to be enrolled in mainstream schools or Portugal where special schools are described by the report as an exception. However, as shown by the following table, in many countries educational provision includes special schools for specific impairments and some countries (e.g. Portugal, Finland) indicate an increasing investment in special schools, allowing them an additional role as resource centres. For example, while the United Kingdom's general legal framework guarantees free access to compulsory schooling for all children, it does not guarantee to provide it in mainstream schools and the United Kingdom did not adopt the full UN Convention commitment to move decisively or comprehensively towards the elimination of segregated schooling.

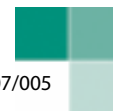


Table 3: educational provision for young disabled people indicated in the Reports

	Ordinary classes	Special classes or Units	Special schools	Impairment-specific special schools
Austria	X	X	X	H V In
Cyprus	X	X	X	H V In
Czech Republic	X	X	X	
Denmark	X	X	X	H
Estonia	X	n/a	resource centres	H V B
Finland	X	X		HV B
Germany	X	X	X	10 imp.
Greece	X			HV In M
Hungary	X	n/a	X	H V
Iceland	X	X	X	H V In M
Ireland	X	X	X	H V In M
Latvia	X	X	X	In
Lithuania	X	X		
Malta	X	?	X	H V In M
The Netherlands	X	X	X	H V In M
Norway	X	X	X	
Poland	X	X	ressource centres	H V In
Portugal	X	X	X	
Slovak Republic	X	X		H V In
Slovenia	X	X		H V In
Spain	X	n/a		H V In
Sweden	X	X		H V In
UK	X			H V In M

Source: authors' compilation of the ANED country reports 2010

Public schools, independent or co-operative schools with state agreement

Key: H= hearing; V= visual; In = Intellectual; B = bevarioral; M = mobility impairment; n/a: information not available



Consequently, special schools still appear as part of the general education system in many countries and appropriate education may mean either mainstream or special schools depending on an individual profile. In all countries (except Sweden where categorizing is avoided), there are four types of impairment that may, when disability is linked to more than a mild impairment, lead to a decision for segregated education: hearing impairment, visual impairment, mental impairment and behavioural disorders. Special education is then provided in special settings or in special classes located in a regular school building. For example, according to the Dutch report, although the Government aims to reduce the growing number of pupils being referred to special schools, it considers, as some other countries may do, the principle right of parents to choose the school where their children are educated, special or not. The UK adopts a related position by giving parents of disabled children the same opportunity as all parents to state a preference for the school at which they wish their child to be educated. The Polish report indicates that some parents, and parents' organizations, want to maintain special schools and criticize the existing inclusive education settings while, according to the report from Latvia, the Ministry of Education and Science supports the principle that education both in special and in regular settings should be available to children and young disabled people.

In Finland, Malta and Portugal special schools have recently been given an additional duty by law. In addition to providing education for children and youth with severe impairments (hearing impairment, visual impairment, cognitive impairment, challenging behaviours) they have become 'resource centres' and are working together with inclusive regular schools to assess students with SEN, develop IEPs and, when needed, to provide special support or teaching. For this task, resource centres are allocated special financial means by the Ministry of Education.

2.4 A commitment to inclusive education anchored in an early tracking system

After compulsory schooling, young people between 15 and 18 years old, have different choices (which may vary also in different countries). They may attend upper secondary schools aiming towards studying in further or higher education or undertake an upper secondary vocational education according to their professional choice. They may also request direct vocational training for quick access to employment. In all countries there is a legal framework governing these different options but, in Education laws in Europe, there is a clear distinction between compulsory schooling and post-compulsory education, which includes vocational training, upper secondary school, higher education and adult education.



2.5 An early tracking system addressing gaps in general upper secondary education

In all European countries there are laws on upper secondary education aimed at preparing students, after compulsory schooling, either to academic professional studies leading towards employment or to general academic studies leading towards further and higher education. Some countries have included in their legal framework provisions for preparing pupils (and sometimes also families) for post-compulsory school opportunities (e.g. Austria, Germany, Spain, Slovak Republic) and disabled students have the legal right to access upper secondary education if they have, as their non-disabled peers, successfully completed compulsory schooling. Some other countries may have a more restrictive approach as, for example, in the Netherlands where, according to the national report, upper secondary schools are not allowed to admit students with cognitive disabilities, the latter being intended to enrol in pre-vocational secondary education (Vmbo) and practical training schools (*pro*).

Only two national reports (Lithuania and Iceland) highlighted special needs issues in national legislation on general upper secondary education by contrast to compulsory education where all countries have passed laws providing disabled students with a range of more or less mandatory support. In practice, such arrangements do also exist in other countries, however.

Not considering special needs specifically in general upper secondary education contrasts with the importance given by countries to access to vocational training and with initiatives taken to improve young disabled people's opportunities to transit to higher education as well as to lifelong learning. As stated in the Spanish report '*more legislation has been developed for compulsory educational levels than for higher education (i.e. University) or adult education levels*'.

As for vocational training courses, most reports indicate laws passed to improve access opportunities for young disabled people. For example, Spain passed a law in 2006 on education, introducing the professional qualification program as well as a Royal decree establishing the general organisation of vocational training within the education system. Estonia promulgated, in the same year, a decree ruling that trainees with disabilities must at least have passed the first level of compulsory education for engaging in vocational training as a means for ensuring a good level of qualification, as has Germany, where different levels of vocational training are evidenced.

As to higher education, most reports indicate legislation passed in recent years requiring higher education institutions to provide young disabled people with equal opportunities. In Germany, the *National Framework Act on Higher Education* stipulates for example that universities have to ensure that disabled students are not discriminated against, have access to all academic services and courses and get support according to their educational needs in order to pass exams and meet requirements.



The Spanish report indicates the development of policies guarantying equal opportunities in higher education for persons with disabilities while the 2005 *Higher Education Act* adopted by Hungary grants disabled students the right to exemptions and special arrangements to take the examinations, to choose their institution and appropriate provision and services. Greece adopted in 2009 a quota system allowing disabled students to be accepted at a rate of 5% of all available places in any university course, while Poland adopted legislation on financial support for college and university disabled students.

As for lifelong learning the principle of education for all may be applied in laws on adult education. In Greece, for example, the report notes *'numerous programmes for the continuing education and training of adults, focusing on certified vocational training, on education of adults who have not completed upper secondary education, on language learning for immigrants, as well as for vocational training of disabled people'*. In Hungary, education and training opportunities falling outside formal education are mostly regulated by the *Adult Education Act* (Act CI of 2001). The *Estonian Adult Education Development Plan* for 2009-2013 (a continuation of the *Lifelong Learning Strategy 2005-2008*) foresees that education and relevant possibilities have to be granted to everyone, irrespective of their age, ethnicity, place of residence, socio-economic background, health or special educational needs.

The legal frameworks described in the reports reveal evidence of early tracking systems supporting , as suggested by the Icelandic report (p.16), *'disabled students at the early years and with regard to higher education'* but being less supportive *'after the age of 16 and before the years when students pursue post-secondary education'*. As a consequence, those students lacking skills and knowledge required by general upper secondary education may be orientated to educational routes that are less demanding and more precarious than those proposed by general upper secondary education. This may foster employment in the short term but reduce lifelong learning opportunities. Those who may meet requirements of general upper secondary education may, with this early tracking system, be hampered in their progression through the education system or be presented with progression different opportunities depending on schools' strategies. Early tacking for transition is a valuable policy approach for some groups of young disabled people but it is important that well-meaning interventions do not limit mainstream progression opportunities

2.6 An early tracking system anchored in changes in assessment and admission rules from compulsory to post-compulsory education

The picture of the legal framework under which opportunities of further education are available is a rather complex one. There are either general laws with special provisions for disabled people, or special laws, according to the countries. In addition, vocational training or parts of it are, in many countries, governed by employment laws.



As already mentioned, the target group tends no longer to include all young people needing support to achieve their development and learning. The vocabulary tends less to consider those experiencing barriers associated with migrant languages or their social background after compulsory schooling, for example (although guidance may exist). Special provisions tend now to be more limited to young disabled people, as defined by disability law in each country.

There is a new focus in assessment after compulsory schooling. Whereas the child's needs for successful compulsory schooling were more carefully listed for primary and lower secondary education, they are less considered in the same way for upper secondary schooling, vocational training and higher education. Students are regarded as having a greater responsibility to manage their own studies or acquire skills. They are also more assumed to know how to handle the additional technical devices used in earlier years. The required assessment tends more towards prospective employability and those limitations that may hamper their training, studying, and employment prospects; aimed at listing possible compensations for such limitations.

In many countries (but not in Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Portugal or the United Kingdom), the identification of students with SEN is no longer used in laws dealing with education after compulsory school age and assessment procedures shift from special educational needs towards employability and disability access needs. Levels are still in use and access to vocational training is sometimes restricted to those with the greatest prospects of finding a job after training. Some training schemes have added an assessment of the individual's skills to the usual assessment of disability, as in Portugal. Such re-assessing is also made in those countries where vocational training is not yet very well distinguished from rehabilitation and social integration (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). Different laws govern inclusive vocational training centres, special training centres, and apprenticeship contracts or training contracts in supported employment schemes or, as in Germany, Poland and Austria, training contracts with workshops.

The shift from educational support needs, towards disability access means that upper secondary schools, training centres or universities have to make adaptations that are necessary for the student to overcome identified barriers (for example, adapted examinations). This shift begins to challenge inequality in education, as for instance when the student's career choice is diminished because of inaccessible buildings, lack of adapted transportation systems or other barriers created by the built environment as reported from several countries.

In addition to eligibility criteria for supports, young disabled people have to comply with admission criteria beyond the compulsory school level. In most countries, admission to upper secondary education and higher education still depends on disability policies and strategies developed autonomously by the schools and universities themselves.



As to vocational training, students may have to meet the entry requirements of the various vocational schemes and of their choice of craft and trade (since access to vocational training is often governed by employment laws and a range of professional codes). In this sense, there remains some confusion about the extent to which the requirements for equal treatment in 'occupation and employment', such as Directive 2000/78 EC, are being applied to education or training that is designed to lead into future employment (there is particular uncertainty in the case of academic courses that are not explicitly 'vocational' or 'training').

Furthermore, young disabled people may be hampered in progressing within the education system beyond compulsory levels by the modes of funding. Whereas compulsory schooling is, by law, free of charge, including devices and support measures for children with SEN this is no longer the case in vocational training and higher education where the legal framework is far more flexible. For example, according to the Icelandic report, technical and human support ceases at the age of 16, and young disabled people must seek help from the grants available at the Regional Offices for the Affairs of Disabled People, which are much more limited and restrictive in their allocation rules (and under some threat in the current economic crisis). In Lithuania, young disabled people are entitled to financial support only if they are assessed as having up to 45% of working efficiency and if they do not have academic debts or other penalties imposed by the University. Here, as in many others, the legal framework of foundations allows for the involvement of civil society in funding further education. The report from Germany indicates an example of good practice with the 'Hildegardis-Verein', a private association that supports women in their university studies and academic careers, offers a mentoring programme for 60 female disabled students. Lithuania and some other countries indicate support by the Students' Unions, supported different bodies in civil society. Malta indicates two more foundations supporting professional training for young disabled people.

2.7 A commitment to inclusion rooted in a cross-sectoral perspective

According to the legal frameworks, implementing inclusion often involves several departments and ministries, and coordination issues are often raised. The Lithuanian report is the only one indicating that a single law governs compulsory schooling, upper secondary and higher education (although special schools remain the responsibility of the ministries of health and social security and labour). According to other reports, different ministries bear the responsibility for educating young disabled people. For example, in Germany, Estonia and Hungary, the Ministry of Education is responsible both for education and for vocational training. In Latvia and Estonia it is the Ministry of Welfare that is responsible for vocational training, which is linked to vocational rehabilitation. In other countries, it is the Ministry of Labour/Employment that has the responsibility vocational training. In the United Kingdom, while education is under the responsibility of the Department of Education, policy for further education and higher education is the responsibility of the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.



In addition, responsibilities for support arrangements may be divided among ministries. In many countries, pedagogical accessibility is the responsibility of the ministry of education whereas supports linked with impairment may fall under the responsibility of other ministries. In the Czech Republic for example, needs identification lies not with the Education Ministry but with the Health Ministry, while in Ireland it is the Health Ministry that assesses educational needs in conjunction with the National Council for Special Education, which coordinates the educational process.

Physical accessibility of school buildings may depend on another ministry. For example, school buildings accessibility may be the responsibility of the municipality or the regional government according to the ownership of the buildings. In some reports this is regarded as an obstacle to admitting a child with substantial mobility impairment with need for accessibility adjustments, simply because it will take a long time to access the money necessary for adapting the building.

Responsibilities in supports and arrangements may also be split at territorial level. In many European countries, Compulsory Schooling is under local responsibility, upper secondary schools are under regional responsibility and higher education is under national responsibility (with the notable exception of Germany, Austria and Spain where the Länder, Regions and Autonomous Communities govern the implementation of the national educational framework). In Denmark, most schools are run by the municipalities, but national or regional special schools are run by the regions. Municipalities and schools may be obliged to include services provided by the welfare services in the curriculum. In Finland and in Portugal, municipalities have, in addition, to include individual health care for disabled students into the school curriculum, which implies cross financing and co-working with health services. Several reports insist on the necessity for greater cooperation between the different services and education opportunities, private and public, inclusive and special. Well aware of these cross-cutting issues, nearly all laws provide in one of their articles that the relevant ministries should work together for the implementation of inclusion at national level and their administrations at local level.

2.8 A commitment to inclusion that may challenge students' rights in post-compulsory education

Educational laws and policies are not always attuned with international and national disability laws and policies. This may be the result of neglecting some provisions in the legal framework because their relevance for inclusive education for all had not been assessed at the time when laws and policies were drafted. It may also represent a weakening effect to the conditions of reasonable accommodation laid down in discrimination laws in the implementation of subsidiary legislation.



2.9 A right to education challenged by policies that fail to include transition issues

The implementation of the right to education beyond compulsory education is underpinned by the ability of young disabled people to disclose their needs and to be proactive in the implementation of the supports and arrangements they are entitled to. Indeed, the demands placed on education institutions often change at different levels, especially in higher education, where they are merely required to make reasonable accommodation (in contrast to primary and secondary schools which are expected to provide all the conditions necessary to students' academic success). As a consequence, it is interesting to note that, in general, support after compulsory schooling is considered primarily in terms of 'reasonable accommodation' and technical support (such as the kinds of note-taking, sign interpretation or mobility support often listed in the reports) rather than the kind of pedagogical learning support often provided in schools. This may suggest particular barriers to academic study opportunities at higher levels for students with learning difficulties and intellectual impairments.

The concept of 'reasonable' accommodation is well-established but contentious. In Iceland, for example, universities may reserve the right to refuse specific supports if these are deemed to be too expensive or impractical and, therefore, unreasonable. In Germany, disabled students who would like to follow a higher academic career face a serious obstacle because the social assistance authorities consider a bachelor degree as sufficient qualification for a job and, for this reason, refuse to provide additional support to disabled students for masters level courses.

The right to education may also be challenged when transition issues are insufficiently taken into account by laws, policies and education institutions. Some reports describe transition services from school to vocational training and employment. For example, special information on professional training and professional issues is provided during the last two years of compulsory schooling in Austria, Germany, Portugal and the Slovak Republic. It has to be added that the same countries try to maintain the designation of students with SEN during the three or four years of upper secondary schooling, as does the United Kingdom.

However, there is little in existing laws on provisions supporting disabled students in transition from lower secondary education to upper secondary education or from there into higher education. As a consequence, transition appears to be mainly a matter of good practices rather than provisions established by law. Students may lack preparation and skills for the new requirements they face or appropriate guidance and advice in managing the changes governing access and support in post-compulsory education and access to work. Some universities, as in Denmark, are asking students to apply for admission a year before they plan to come to university so that the necessary adaptations may be undertaken in time (although this may contradict the timing of their examinations at the end of upper secondary schooling or for entry to university).



Most of the country reports underline that in those years where young people need more support; there is a significant gap and much individual personal responsibility to navigate information on financial support, choices and the routes available. This gap may, in particular, lead to deprivation from special support and accommodation for students who may feel stigmatised from revealing their disability status, because they fear the consequences of such disclosure or because they do not want to be treated as 'disabled' (e.g. those with a specific learning difficulty or a mental health condition).

2.10 Studying abroad in higher education: a special challenge

The data in the reports show a very diverse picture of legal provisions for studying abroad (in higher education) and the 13 reports where this is evident can be divided into three groups:

- those describing only support given to foreign students ,
- those describing only support provided to national students abroad,
- those describing both.

Some countries only provide support to their nationals studying abroad but do not provide support resources to foreign students coming to study. This restriction appears to apply in Spain, Ireland, Latvia and Germany where national disabled students are given the possibility to study abroad while maintaining the support they had received in their home country. In Germany this is only possible for two semesters. The following examples are illustrative and the legal issues and technicalities of entitlement to mobility of benefits within the EU/EEA are discussed in much more detail in the 2010 ANED report on that topic. Although States have an obligation to treat nationals of other Member States on equal terms this is subject to existing domestic eligibility criteria (which may include a previous residence requirement, for example). In this sense, support for migration and mobility for the purposes of studying raises more uncertainty than nationality within the EU/EEA.

Conversely, other countries do consider support for visiting students. For example, the report from Poland does not refer to national students studying in a foreign country but indicates with precision some limits for foreign students' eligibility to benefits depending on the State they are coming from (Member states of EU or EEA). The report from Greece considers help to foreign students studying there but such help is not available to disabled national students who are studying in another country as part of their course. Special conditions for foreign students are also mentioned in Finland, where financial aid is available to all students in financial difficulty (e.g. grants for studying, housing benefits and state guarantees for student loans). Such support is also available to foreign students living permanently in Finland under conditions of residence listed in the Aliens Act, and depending on the student's country of origin.

The Czech Republic considers supporting foreign or national students within the framework of EU programmes. Students from Slovakia may export their support for disability compensation without limit. Such support is available to foreign students according to the agreements passed with their state of origin and under residence conditions. In Denmark, disabled students who are entitled to special support may keep it abroad if they do not pass beyond the scheduled study duration, and within the framework of an international agreement. The disability supplement granted to Danish students is also available for a disabled student from another country who is studying in Denmark provided that this student is a citizen of a country that is party in an agreement, or of an EU Member State or an EEA country. The report from Lithuania indicates (p.11) that *'if the student is studying in an exchange program or partial studies abroad, s/he has the right to receive financial support from her/his home university. Foreign students, or students without citizenship who satisfy the requirements and had declared their domicile in the Republic of Lithuania, have an equal right to financial support as local students'*. Hungary also considers, under some conditions, to help both their nationals when studying abroad and foreign students studying in Hungary.

From Norway we can read the cautious statement (p. 16): *'Students who have educational support through NAV or the municipality cannot automatically keep the support if studying abroad (but neither is it impossible). Students coming to Norway have the same rights as Norwegian students according to the Act on higher education (but not necessarily other supports).'* This is in line with the general Norwegian law on higher education where provisions are much individualised.

2.11 Summary and conclusion

This chapter shows that there has been a noticeable evolution towards the inclusion of disabled people in the national laws on compulsory, upper secondary and higher education, as well as on vocational training and adult education. The principle of education for all implies that for some people special additional measures are to be undertaken for their access to education and their best possible chance of transition towards adult life and employment. In no country do these measures appear to be generally means-tested. This shows a legal trend towards equal treatment for all those who need it. However, the implementation of these laws is dependent on a complex series of factors, particularly in the very different arrangements for responsibility in the process of support between national, regional, local and institutional authorities. The reliance on 'reasonable' adjustment presents some cause for concern. It is, for example, of concern that academic higher education institutions in many countries appear to retain considerable autonomy in whether to support disabled students, whose equality of treatment would be more clearly guaranteed in training courses specifically related to employment. Of great importance are also the levels of public financing and the security of its annual renewal. Many of the reports indicate announced reductions because of the present economic crisis that could jeopardize their efforts to progress inclusive education with reasonable quality standards.



3 Evidence of progress towards inclusion

This chapter describes the progress made towards inclusion. It looks at the level of qualification of disabled people compared to the general population, the evolution of the educational situation of young disabled people in recent years and their current educational opportunities. It also focuses on the education system's ability to prepare young disabled people to make transitions to upper secondary education, higher education and work. Unfortunately, progress is difficult to measure in a comprehensive or systematic way as precise data are badly missing in most countries due to the lack of reliable or comparable national statistics on post-compulsory education and training sectors. This chapter links data from the ANED country reports with data from other available studies (including those by the OECD). It is possible that some future comparison may be available from European-level data sources (such as EU-SILC and the planned ad hoc module to the European Labour Force Survey in 2011). These are reported separately in parallel ANED work on European indicators but are beyond the scope of this synthesis of the individual country reports.

3.1 A lack of data makes evaluation of progress difficult

Analysis of progress made towards inclusion is very uncertain. Many of the country reports indicate that reliable and accurate data on inclusion opportunities for disabled youth is missing at national level, as also noted in an earlier report by ANED (Grammenos, 2009). The German report indicates, for example, that there is no information about the period of transition from the education and training system to the labour market or about how young people cope with the challenge of entering jobs. The report of the Czech Republic notes that while there is good quality of general data on education and labour market outcomes, these data do not identify or disaggregate disabled people. A considerable amount of data on participation and qualification levels would be available if more countries included disability identification in their regular national Labour Force Surveys (as noted in other ANED reports).

National data sources may also not allow for analysis of the situation of children and young disabled people enrolled in mainstream education. For example, the report of the Netherlands provides only data on special schools while the Scandinavian countries only collect data on students receiving special education or benefiting from additional resources for educational purposes (rather than all disabled learners, including those who do not receive support). Similarly, some countries, such as Denmark or Ireland, count only those students in higher education receiving additional resources and, in so doing, exclude from their data those who do not receive such resources. In many countries there is no systematic data on the participation of disabled students in higher education. According to the reports, countries collect disaggregate data on educational outcomes even for disabled children in school. Data seldom permit even the identification of employment opportunities for young disabled people, most countries lacking data on this group of persons or their transition from school to work opportunities.

However, most countries gather at least some information on educational qualifications through censuses (e.g. as mentioned in Malta, Ireland, and Hungary), research studies or national surveys. As a consequence, while some analysis of national data is possible, identifying comparative access rates to education, qualification rates and progression rates within the education system for disabled students is rarely possible with any accuracy. This is a matter of concern.

Table 4: Availability of national data on education and training for disabled compared to non-disabled young people

	Educational outcomes	Not in Education, Employment nor Training (NEET)	In training	In higher education
Austria	No	No	yes	yes
Czech Republic	No	No	No	yes
Denmark	Some	n.a*	yes	Yes
Estonia	no	some	yes	yes
Finland	no	n.a	yes	yes
Germany	Some	yes	yes	yes
Greece	no	n.a	yes	no
Hungary	Some	n.a	no	some
Iceland	no	no	some	some
Ireland	yes	n.a	some	some
Latvia	no	n.a	no	no
Lithuania	some	n.a	some	some
Malta	yes	yes	yes	yes
The Netherlands	yes	n.a	yes	yes
Norway	no	yes	yes	yes
Poland	yes	n.a	yes	yes
Portugal	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Slovak Republic	some	n.a	some	no
Slovenia	n.a	n.a	some	n.a
Spain	some	most	yes	yes
Sweden	no	n.a	no	n.a
UK	Yes	Yes	yes	Yes

*n.a = not available

Source: ANED compilation extracted from the country reports 2010

In general terms, there are examples of data to show that disabled people have a lower level of qualification than the general population. For example, according to the Polish report, *'in 2009, as many as 66.6% of people with disabilities aged 15 and over had education below secondary level as compared to 41.7% for people without disabilities'*.



In Germany, less than 16% of all disabled children have access to regular school settings and most of them do not have a school leaving qualification when they finish their education at school. The report from the United Kingdom provides examples of items from a national government Disability Equality Indicator set that includes educational qualifications and higher education participation rates.

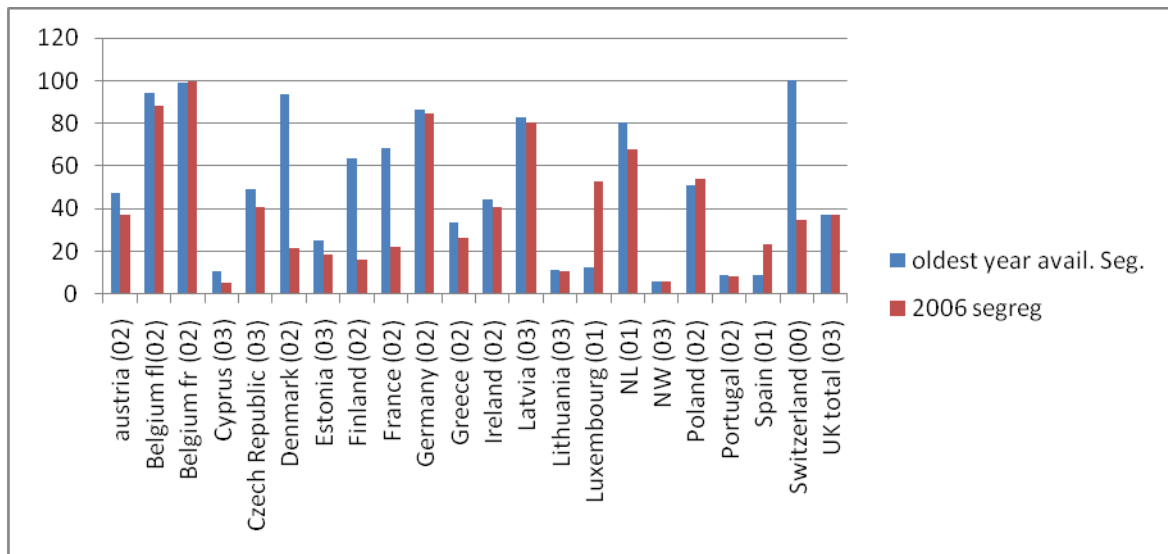
3.2 The situation has evolved in recent years

3.2.1 An increasing access to mainstream education

Overall, educational opportunities in the mainstream have been increasing over the last decade in Europe. According to data gathered by the European Agency on Development of Special Needs Education, the number of children educated in special schools decreased more or less strongly in most European countries. For example, the Slovak report indicates that the number of children and young disabled people enrolled in mainstream schools increased seven-fold between 1996 and 2009 to a total of 22,051 students. Poland and Spain are notable exceptions, since the number of disabled students enrolled in special schools appeared to rise between the oldest year available and 2006. This also happened in Luxemburg and French Belgium, according to the EADSNE reports. The Swedish report indicates a trend to more categorization and separation of specific groups of students based on their functioning and abilities, while the Lithuanian report indicates that the number of students fully included in general education decreased between 2004 and 2009 by about 10%. According to the Latvian report, the proportion of SEN children enrolled in special schools and classes rose from 2.5% of the school population in school year 2005/2006 to 3.9% of the school population.



Figure 1: evolution of numbers of children enrolled in special schools between the oldest year available up to 2006¹⁰



Source: author's calculation extracted from: European Agency for development in special needs education, (2005), *country data*, EADSNE (2008), *country data 2006*, EADSNE, Brussels

Apart from these exceptions a general increase in inclusive education is observable at all levels of education in most countries. In Slovenia, for example, the proportion of students recognised as disabled at secondary level rose from 1.1% of all secondary level pupils to 2.5% in 2008. In the Czech Republic, the number of disabled students fully included in regular schools rose about 15.2% between 2003 and 2008 while the number of SEN students enrolled in high schools in Slovenia nearly doubled between 2005 and 2008.

Young disabled people tend also to have a better access to vocational training. In Hungary, for example, the number of disabled students enrolled in vocational schools doubled between 1991 and 2001. The Greek report indicates an increased participation of disabled people in vocational training in upper secondary education. In Austria, the number of young disabled people following an integrative vocational training programme in 2009 had tripled compared to 2004. In the Netherlands, the prospects for students with minor learning difficulties or behavioural disorders to be admitted to vocational training doubled between 2003 and 2007, whereas the rate of young disabled people among all young people in vocational training doubled between 2005 and 2007 to 12%.

¹⁰ These figures do not claim to compare countries systematically since definitions and approaches of disability vary greatly between countries.



According to the Irish report, increasing access to vocational training has a positive impact on students' prospects as 30% progressed into employment and 32% to further education and training. In Estonia, 2.7% of all students enrolled in vocational training have a disability.

More young disabled adults also access higher education. In Lithuania, the number of disabled students in higher education increased almost two-fold between 2005 and 2009, to 0.5% of the student population, while it increased three-fold between 2002 and 2008 in Hungary to 1,176 students. In Ireland, the rate of disabled students rose from 1.1% in the academic year 1998/1999 to 3.2% in 2005/2006, whereas it increased nearly three-fold in Poland between 2005 and 2008 to 1.31% of students enrolled in higher education. In Germany, the number of students enrolled in higher education indicating a 'health problem' rose from 15.3% in 2003 to 18.4% in 2006 while the Austrian report shows that the number of students indicating a health problem in higher education had risen from 11.9% in 2002 to 20.6% in 2006 (see, Ebersold, 2010). While these examples indicate progress it is important to note that this was often beginning from a very low starting point.

In summary, inclusive education policies and practical support appear to have had a positive impact on educational participation opportunities of young disabled people. Non-discrimination legislation has led schools and colleges to be more receptive to disability issues and, more generally, to diversity. Supports allocated to schools or to students have increased the latter's success opportunities. For example, the report from the United Kingdom indicates that standard assessment tests in English, Maths and Science implemented at age 11 (key stage 2), at age 14 (key stage 3) and at age 16 (key stage 4) show improving results for disabled children year on year.

3.3 Increasing access is unequally shared among different groups

This increase of enrolment in inclusive education seems to be particularly notable for children and youth with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia, etc.). In France, for example, the number of students with such learning difficulty and students with a psychological conditions accessing mainstream education grew faster than the number of students with a cognitive impairment, a sensory impairment, and to a lesser extent, with a motor impairment (Ebersold, 2010). The German report indicates that access to mainstream education is easier for children with speech impairments and specific learning difficulties than for those with cognitive impairments (Kultusministerkonferenz 2008, XIV).

A similar trend may be observed in higher education. The Swedish report indicates that students receiving support include those with dyslexia or reading and writing difficulties (61%) and, to a much lesser extent, those with cognitive difficulties (16%). According to the Icelandic report, 53% of students requiring some form of assistance in higher education in 2008 and 2009 had dyslexia whereas 9.3% had a motor impairment and 2.3% a sensory impairment.

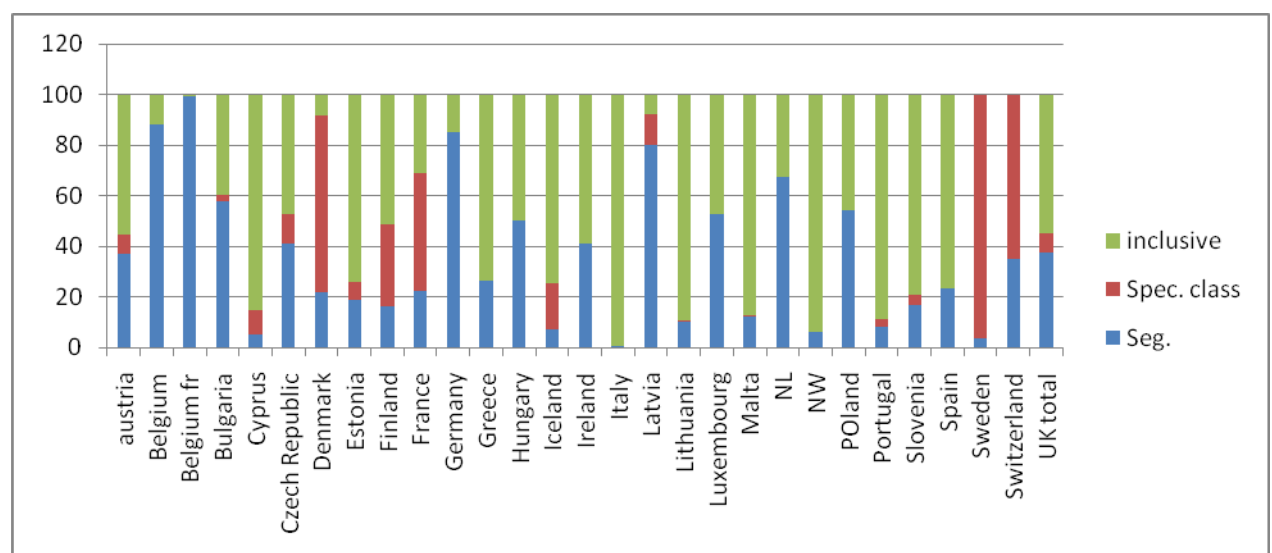
According to a research study by OECD on pathways followed by young disabled people beyond upper secondary education, the proportion of students with a learning difficulty recognized in Ireland by the fund for disabled students rose from nearly 2% between 2005 and 2007 to 67% of all disabled students, while the proportion of students with a sensory or a physical impairment decreased by about 5% during the same period. The same research indicated that while the proportion of students enrolled in tertiary education in Denmark receiving benefits because of a specific learning difficulty rose by 5% between 2004 and 2006, to 66% of the student population receiving support, the proportion with a sensory or a motor impairment fell by around 5% during the same period (OECD, 2008; Ebersold, 2010).

3.4 How inclusive are education systems?

3.4.1 Education is still implemented in both inclusive and special settings

Despite development of inclusive education policies, most countries still school SEN pupils both in regular schools and in special schools. In some countries like Germany, Latvia, the Netherlands, they are mainly enrolled in special schools while in others like Italy, Spain, Slovenia, Greece, Estonia, Norway they tend to be mainly enrolled in mainstream schools. The report from the United Kingdom indicates that despite considerable policy change, approximately 40% of children for whom formal special needs arrangements are made attend special schools. The Finland report indicates that existing special schools tend to focus on children with physical and sensory impairments (blind or deaf children). In Malta, those enrolled in special schools generally have an intellectual impairment or a combination of several impairments.

Figure 2: Type of schooling of special needs students in 2006



Source: author's calculation extracted from: European Agency for development in special needs education, (2008) *Country data 2006*, EADSNE, Brussels



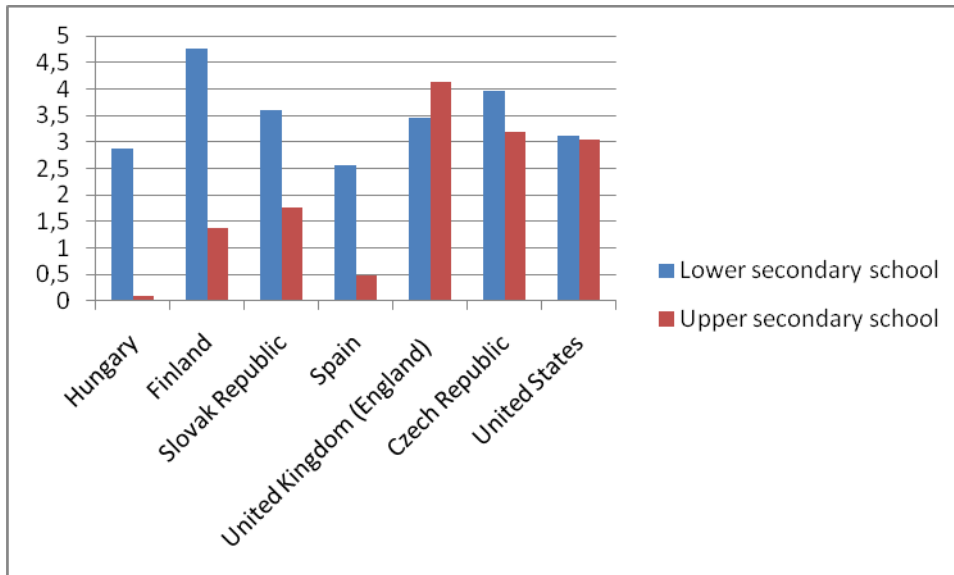
For those whose needs are not being met in mainstream education there may be incentives for parents and students to prefer special schools. Referring to a survey made on students having left public school in 2006-2007, the Danish report indicates (p.9) that *'young people who had attended a special needs class or school had experienced it as a relief to be placed there and had liked going to school. In the special needs class or school they were not being constantly subjected to demands which they were unable to meet, and they were not exposed to the same degree of bullying as when they were in an ordinary class'*.

It is important to emphasise that being enrolled in a mainstream school does not necessarily mean full inclusion within the school. Many countries tend to 'include' disabled students in special classes. The EADSNE data described in Figure 2 suggest that students enrolled in mainstream education in Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland are mainly following their courses in special classes. These countries differ from Italy, Norway, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, Cyprus, Spain, Iceland and Malta where SEN students are mainly schooled in inclusive settings and from countries like Finland and France where there is a mix between all three modes of educational provision in schools.

3.5 Disabled students face difficulties in progressing to upper secondary education

Despite efforts made to enlarge inclusion opportunities at all levels of education, young disabled people seem to have lower access opportunities to upper secondary education than their non-disabled peers. According to data gathered by the OECD up to 2003, few disabled students were accessing upper secondary education, especially in Hungary, Spain, Finland and the Slovak Republic.

Figure 3: International comparison of numbers of students receiving additional resources in lower secondary education and upper secondary education for a disability, as a percentage of all students in that phase of education (2003)



Source: OECD, (2007). *Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Disadvantages: Policies, Statistics and Indicators*. OECD, Paris.

Most of the country reports suggest a continuing gap between lower and secondary education. Referring to a report published in 2007 by the national disability authority, the Irish report notes that 27% of young disabled people aged 15-19 had left full-time education compared to 19% of non-disabled population in the same age group. According to the report from the United Kingdom, 39% of 16-year-olds with disabilities continue into post-16 academic schooling, compared to 50% of non-disabled young people. The Austrian report states that SEN students have much lower chances to access upper secondary education than their non-SEN counterparts, while the Norwegian report, indicates that 44% of young disabled people (20-25) reached upper secondary education, compared to 48% for the general population. While data from national administrative sources is not directly comparable the general trends and gaps appear widespread.

Disabled students tend also to have lower success opportunities in upper secondary education compared to their non-disabled peers as suggested, for example, by the report of the United Kingdom, which indicates that only 14.9% of students with an SEN statement¹¹ attained five or more GCE exam at grades A-C, compared to 40.3% of SEN pupils without statements and 80.2% of students without SEN.

¹¹ 'There is a formal system of registering SEN, at different levels of need and for different categories (including a formal written 'statement' for those requiring more support).' (report of the United Kingdom)

The Austria report notes that disabled students, especially those with intellectual impairments, tend to drop out or switch to a special school after the eighth grade. Disabled students may also leave upper secondary education without the academic requirements for entry to higher education, especially where entry depends on success in standard admission tests, for example in the Czech Republic. This is of particular concern in countries where streaming in special educational curricula during upper secondary automatically exclude those pupils in those routes from any possibility of progression to higher education entry level (e.g. a concern in the German school system).

3.6 Disabled students face difficulties in progressing to higher education

Young disabled people then have lesser chances to access higher education than their non-disabled peers. In Ireland, while the overall rate of access to tertiary education rose by 8% between 2000 and 2006, the rate for disabled students went up by only 2.6%. In Norway, 9% of young disabled people entered higher education compared to 21% of the general population of this age. In Malta, 4.4% of disabled people reached higher education against 10% of non-disabled people, while in Spain, in 2009, only 5.4% of the disabled people had a university education compared to 19.1% for non-disabled people. In the United Kingdom, only 28% of disabled young people enter higher education by the age of 19 compared to 41% of non-disabled young people, yet amongst those students who declare disability and complete their first degree (Bachelor), 56% attain at least an 'upper second' class degree, almost the same as for non-disabled students (59%).

Young disabled people are also more likely than non-disabled youth to face discontinuities during their studies in higher education. According to the OECD, disabled students tend to be more likely to follow part-time courses than non-disabled students, to drop out after the first year and are less likely to graduate (OECD, 2010). The German report reveals, for example, that disabled students tend to have more erratic pathways during their studies. They need more time for their studies, are more likely than non-disabled students to change their courses (23% vs. 19%) and/or university (18% vs. 16%) and are less likely to gain a university degree. In the absence of appropriate support systems, such difficulties impact more greatly on students with more severe or complex impairments. For example, as the Austrian report notes, young disabled people whose impairments posed fewer challenges for special educational support structures and adaptive teaching were more likely to attain higher education or, according to the Lithuanian report, those more or less able to take care about themselves (or provided with support by their family members) are better able to study.

According to OECD research on young disabled people' transition to tertiary education and employment, disabled young adults are less likely than their non-disabled peers to access the most professionally promising courses. For example, in Norway, they are more likely to be enrolled in ISCED 5B courses whereas non-disabled students are mainly enrolled in ISCED 5A courses.

In France, they are over-represented in fields of study where students face higher unemployment after leaving higher education, have uncertain career paths marked by short-term contracts and lower wages than those enrolled on other courses (Ebersold, 2010).

3.7 Progression opportunities differ among young disabled people

Out of 24 country reports, 20 indicate at least some student data on the type of impairment/disability and progression opportunities in education tend to differ depending on the type and severity. Youth with a cognitive impairment or with multiple impairments tend to have fewer opportunities in progressing than those with other types of impairments. For example, according to the Hungarian and the Slovenian report, students with intellectual disabilities have poor chances to access to Secondary Education.

Table 5: Data on disabled students

	Breakdown by type of disability	Breakdown by disability and Gender	Breakdown by disability and Age	Breakdown by disability and Socio-econ	Breakdown by disability and Ethnicity
Austria	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Czech Republic	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Denmark	Some	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Estonia	some	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Finland	Yes	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Germany	Yes	Yes	n.a	n.a	some
Greece	Some	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Hungary	Yes	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Iceland	Some	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Ireland	Some	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Latvia	Some	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Lithuania	Yes	Yes	n.a	n.a	n.a
Malta	Yes	Yes	n.a	n.i	n.i
The Netherlands	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes
Norway	Yes	Yes	n.a	n.a	n.a
Poland	yes				
Portugal	Some	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Slovak Republic	Some	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Slovenia	yes	n.a	n.a	n.a	yes
Spain	Yes	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
Sweden	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
UK	Yes	Yes	yes	yes	yes

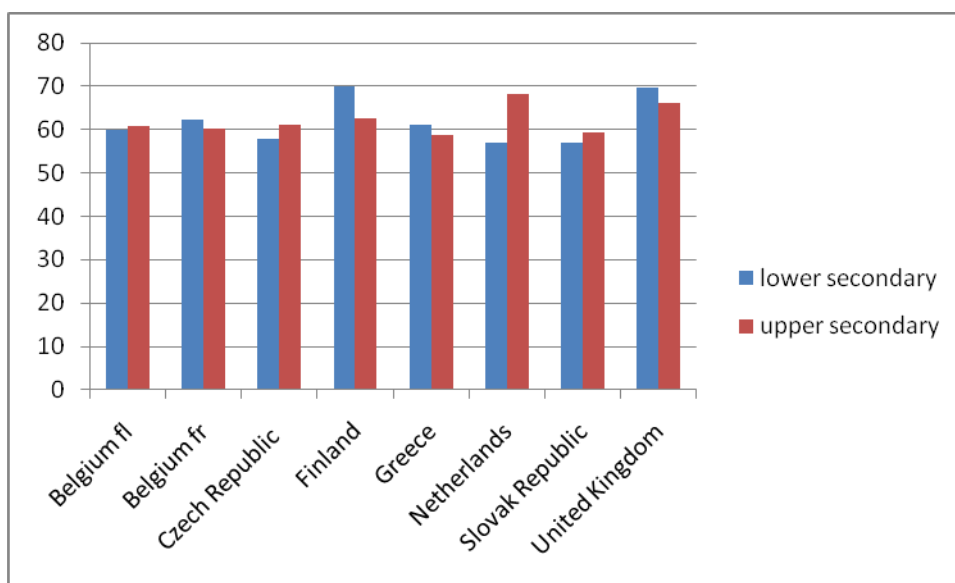
Source: ANED compilation extracted from the country reports 2010

Many reports indicate that youth with mobility impairments tend, on average, to have higher qualifications than those with other types of impairment. For example, the Icelandic report indicates that students with mobility impairment are less exposed to drop out in upper secondary education than those with learning difficulties while the Slovak report mentions that they have better progression opportunities than those with a sensory impairment.

Many reports highlight the difficulties encountered by youth with psycho-social conditions. In Germany, they lack appropriate VET options and access to sheltered workshops (Deutsche Akademie für Rehabilitation e.V. 2009, 176). The Danish report points out that educational environments may be simply inappropriate and can worsen difficulties, especially where problems are only identified once students are enrolled. The Dutch report indicates that the number of disabled students enrolled in special schools at High School level rose from 14 per 1,000 in 1995 to 25 per 1,000 in 2007, especially for those labelled as having behavioural problems.

Out of 24 reports, 6 indicate some data on gender differences. Progression opportunities in education differ among male and female SEN Students (as well as among male and female student more generally). According to the OECD, females tend to be more likely than males to progress to upper secondary education in those 6 countries (Denmark, Finland, Greece, United Kingdom (England), French Belgium) and the percentage of males tends to decrease between lower and upper secondary education. As an example, the Danish report indicates that 61% of students enrolled in further education in 2008 were female while in Finland and in Norway women have a higher level of education than men.

Figure 4: gender ratio of male students receiving additional resources for disabilities in public and private lower and upper secondary schools in 2003



Source: OECD, (2007). *Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Disadvantages: Policies, Statistics and Indicators*. OECD, Paris.



By contrast, males appear to have better progression opportunities to upper secondary education than females in the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic and in Flemish Belgium, where the percentages of men receiving additional resources tend to rise between Lower and upper secondary education.

Out of 24 reports, 4 indicate at least some data on ethnic minority origin among SEN students. In Germany, young people coming from migrant families are over-represented in special schools, especially in those for learning difficulties but they are under-represented in VET programmes, and are more likely to lack vocational qualification. According to the Austrian report, adolescents from ethnic minority background are over-represented among those children identified as SEN children, while in Portugal students whose first language was not Portuguese and those belonging to an ethnic minority are largely referred to special education. In Slovenia, Roma children are over-represented among those children classified as disabled and sent to special schools. Existing figures from 2006 show that the share of Roma children enrolled in special schools is seven times higher than the share of non-Roma children.

Difficulties faced by young disabled people in transition to upper secondary education and higher education may be related to an absence of education policies for early tracking and, as described in the previous chapter, provision of adequate support to students and schools beyond compulsory level. Some reports highlight the fact that additional difficulties have a strong disabling effect.

In countries providing education in special schools, students may start in fully inclusive education, or special classes, but end up in special schools as they get older (as evidenced in the Polish report, Wapiennik, 2008). In some countries, they may also reflect barriers resulting from education systems that provide different curriculum routes for disabled and non-disabled youth, which may prevent disabled students from applying to higher education and the most professionally-oriented of training routes, even if they do well at school. These differences in opportunities affect some groups more than others and, particularly, those groups that are most at risk of segregation during secondary level schooling.

3.8 Education systems face difficulties in preparing young disabled people to make transitions from education to work

The growing presence of young disabled people in all levels and sectors of education seems to have a relative minor impact on their employment opportunities (Berthoud, 2006; OECD, 2006; OECD, 2008; ANED, 2009). While the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people has narrowed in some countries, in others economic growth has been accompanied by a decline in the employment rate for disabled persons. In Ireland for example, the employment rate of persons with disabilities dropped by 3% between 2002 and 2004 while it decreased by 5% in the Netherlands between 2002 and 2005 (Ebersold, 2010). In other countries, like Norway or Poland, the employment rate of persons with disabilities did not increase as much as for those without disabilities.

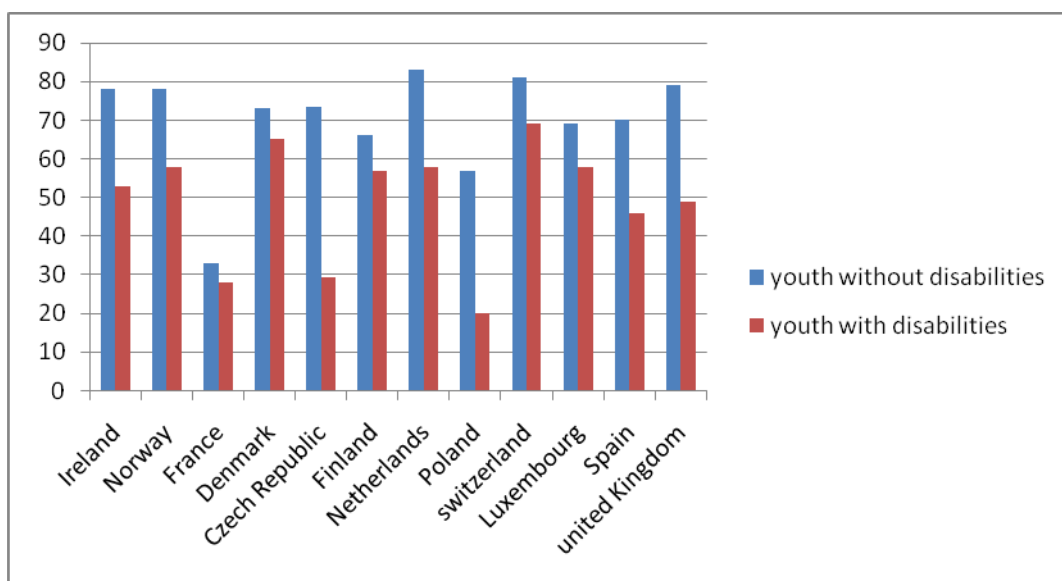
In particular, concerns have been raised about transitions from education to work for young disabled people entering the labour market.

3.9 Young disabled people have a lower employment rate than their non-disabled peers

Few countries have data allowing for the identification of transitions from school to work for young disabled people (although EU SILC household panel data may offer some future potential for tracking individuals through such transitions in different countries). The country reports providing data on this issue reveal gaps between disabled youth compared to their non-disabled peers. According to the Hungarian report, young adults with disabilities aged between 15 and 24 have an employment rate of 14%, which is much lower than the general employment rate. Referring to the national living conditions survey, the Norwegian report shows that young disabled adults have an employment rate that is 13% points lower than non-disabled youth while in Malta it is 6% points lower than the average population.

Data provided by the OECD also reveals a general trend to lower employment rates of young disabled people compared to their non-disabled peers as shown by the following figure.

Figure 5: Employment rates of youth with and without disabilities in 2005

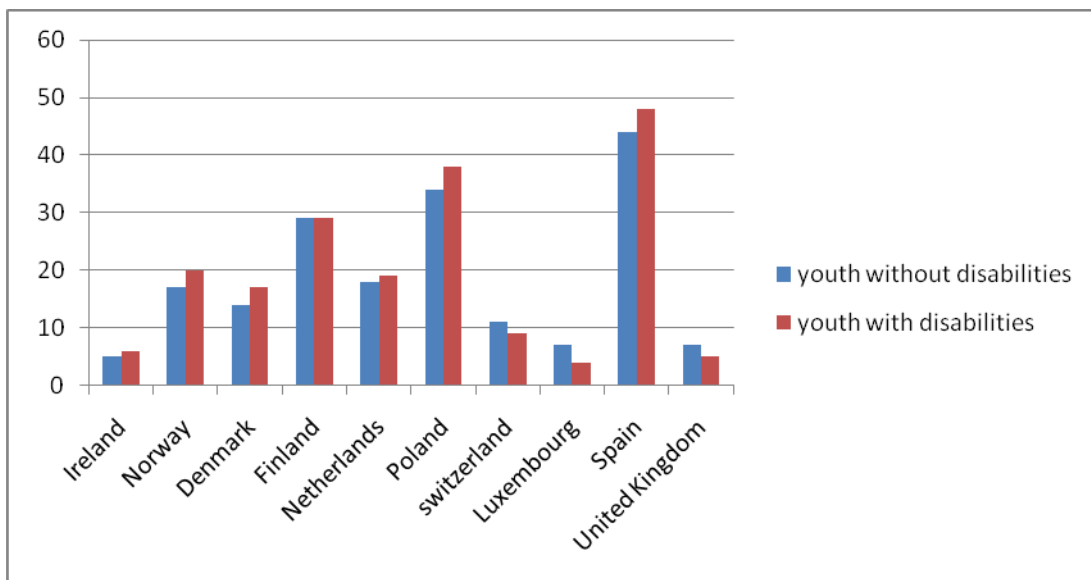


Source: OECD, (2006), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers: Norway, Poland and Switzerland*, Vol. 1, OECD, Paris; OECD, (2007), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers, Australia, Luxembourg, Spain, United Kingdom*, vol.2, OECD, Paris. OECD, (2008a), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers: Denmark, Finland, Ireland and the Netherlands*, Vol. 3, OECD, Paris

3.10 Young disabled people are more likely to have precarious and part-time jobs

Young disabled people are more likely to have precarious and part-time jobs that do not always foster professionally marketable work experience, and over-expose them to recurrent unemployment. As shown by the following figure, young adults with disabilities aged 20-34 are more likely to be exposed to precarious jobs than their non-disabled counterparts in Poland (+4%), in Norway (+3%), in Denmark (+3%). By contrast, they are less likely to be exposed to such work in Switzerland, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom.

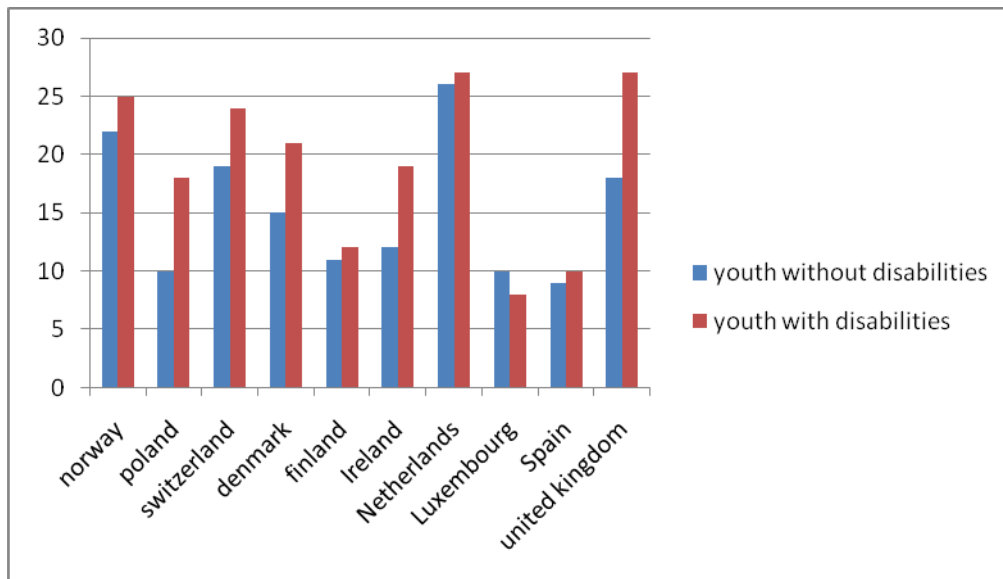
Figure 6: Temporary employment for youth with and without disabilities (20 34) at latest available year



Source: OECD, (2006), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers: Norway, Poland and Switzerland*, Vol. 1, OECD, Paris; OECD, (2007), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers, Australia, Luxembourg, Spain, United Kingdom*, vol.2, OECD, Paris. OECD, (2008a), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers: Denmark, Finland, Ireland and the Netherlands*, Vol. 3, OECD, Paris

Young disabled people are more likely to be exposed to part-time jobs than their non-disabled peers, especially in Poland, (+8%), in Ireland (+7%) and in Denmark (+6%). By contrast, they are less likely to work part time than non-disabled in Luxembourg and more or less equally likely to work part time in Finland (+1%) and in the Netherlands (+1%).

Figure 7: part time employment for youth with and without disabilities (20-34) at latest available year



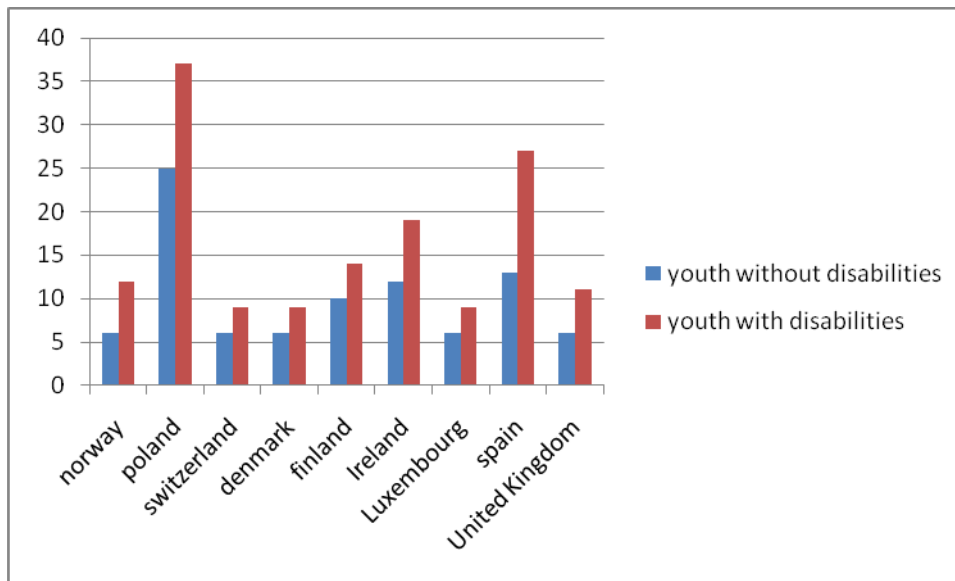
Source: OECD, (2006), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers: Norway, Poland and Switzerland*, Vol. 1, OECD, Paris; OECD, (2007), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers, Australia, Luxembourg, Spain, United Kingdom*, vol.2, OECD, Paris. OECD, (2008a), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers: Denmark, Finland, Ireland and the Netherlands*, Vol. 3, OECD, Paris

3.11 Young disabled people are more likely to be excluded from the labour market than non-disabled youth

Transition from school to work difficulties may have a strong disabling effect since they over-expose young disabled people to unemployment and to inactivity. According to the Malta report, the unemployed rate of young adults with disabilities aged 20-29 is three times the unemployment rate of the general population. The Norwegian report states that young disabled people aged 20 to 25 are eight times more exposed to unemployment than their non-disabled peers. The Danish report indicates that young adults with disabilities lack academic skills and social competences allowing them to work independently and access to appropriate jobs.



Figure 8: Unemployment rate for youth with and without disabilities (20-34) at latest available year



Source: OECD, (2006), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers: Norway, Poland and Switzerland*, Vol. 1, OECD, Paris; OECD, (2007), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers, Australia, Luxembourg, Spain, United Kingdom*, vol.2, OECD, Paris. OECD, (2008a), *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers: Denmark, Finland, Ireland and the Netherlands*, Vol. 3, OECD, Paris

These difficulties in accessing employment not only over-expose young disabled people to unemployment, but also to exclusion from the labour market. In Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands, the rate of young disabled people receiving a non-contributory disability benefit increased in the last decade and the report from the Netherlands stresses the Government's concern with the rapid growth of disability benefits allocated to young disabled people (OECD, 2006 ; OECD, 2008). In the Czech Republic, the number of young disabled people quitting the labour market rose sharply between 2002 and 2008, while the number of those employed or unemployed virtually stagnated during the same period of time (Ebersold, 2010). The Maltese report reveals that, among young disabled people aged 20-29, 35% are considered 'unable to work' due to illness or disability compared to 2.3% for the general population.

3.12 Summary and conclusion

Most countries in the EU/EEA have progressed in implementing legal frameworks for educational inclusion to varying degrees, depending on national policies (as described in chapter two) but the evidence of outcomes raises many questions and concerns about their implementation. There is wide diversity in the extent to which national educational systems still rely on segregated provision (especially at compulsory school levels).



There is widespread evidence of equality gaps between disabled and non-disabled young people in relation to educational progression, educational achievement and transitional outcomes. At the same time there is a critical lack of robust data on which to make evidence based comparisons between all countries in the EU/EEA. Much of this difficulty stems from differences in administrative definitions arising from the subsidiary policy frameworks of the Member States. However, there is also a lack of specificity or granularity within the existing sources of national data that do exist, which often makes it difficult to disaggregate 'disabled' learners from the general category of 'special educational needs'. In some countries this data remains lacking.

Of particular concern is that the existing evidence suggests that education systems still tend to fail in empowering young disabled people to make successful transitions to post-compulsory education, to higher education and into employment. Particular attention needs to be drawn to the barriers and the enablers of progression at post-compulsory levels, and to transitions to the labour market. Understanding more about the policies and practices that exist to support such transitions is, therefore, important. As we shall see (in chapter four) transition opportunities within and beyond education depend in many countries on students' individual coping skills and their ability to overcome the weaknesses of education systems, in terms of support arrangements (e.g. by capitalising on their family environment and social network resources).

Countries relating the difficulties of disabled students primarily to the modes of pedagogical organisation and teaching practices tend to show better transition rates to upper secondary education than countries having a diagnostic approach to disability (focusing on the individuals' inabilities). These kinds of difficulties advocate for an educational approach to disability, which leads schools to consider diversity as a resource for all students and not as a constraint (to consider supports and arrangements as a factor in the success of any student, with or without disability or specific learning difficulty, and as a source of development for the entire institution). This approach fosters within schools an inclusive ethos aiming at developing a pedagogical environment accessible to any individual; access is then considered as a means for promoting the schools' openness to their environment. The next chapter provides evidence about how these practical challenges are approached in different European countries.



4 Means developed for supporting the inclusion of young disabled people

This chapter will focus on supports and arrangements provided to young disabled people and stakeholders in implementing the general policies described in chapter two. While there is considerable concern about the extent of exclusion that still exists, including the extent of segregation (as described in the previous chapter), this chapter focuses on the practical mechanisms that support inclusion. It will describe the assessment procedures that are required before taking one or another route of post-compulsory education and the eligibility criteria that may create barriers or facilitators for disabled students or trainees. It will provide a series of examples of the kinds of support available to them, including financial support. As far as provided by the reports, some indication of states' financial commitment to inclusive post-secondary education will also be evidenced in this chapter.

4.1 Main support allocation principles for inclusion

The reports from the different countries provide an extensive description of the means developed for education for all at compulsory school level. For post-secondary level they illustrate a complex picture of inclusion and education opportunities. Most countries allocate technical, human and financial resources aimed at empowering young disabled people to have opportunities and to support schools and higher education institutions. States are therefore using two different means to support inclusive education:

- They may give a yearly amount to the education institutions, based on the number of disabled students, towards the costs of adapting education to individual requirements.
- They may give direct specific allowances to each student who then pays for his/her assistance, special devices and other necessary support according to the assessed needs.

Most countries distinguish the supports needed for education from those necessary for daily living. Resource allocation, therefore, frequently results from cross-financing between a ministry or local authority for education (responsible for providing pedagogical support) and a ministry of social welfare, family or health (responsible for providing benefits and support to compensate the impact of disability in daily life).

In Lithuania for example, the Department of Disability Affairs at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour allocates financial means to young disabled people, allowing for additional personal costs arising from education while the ministry of education is responsible for special pedagogical support and the co-ordination of assistants and professionals (specialist teachers, speech therapists, sign language interpreters) necessary in the educational context.

In the Netherlands, the support available for students and teachers in inclusive settings is the shared responsibility of the ministry of education, the ministry of social affairs and employment, the ministry of welfare and health, the municipalities, the private health insurance companies and several providers of benefits. In the United Kingdom, personal assistance and equipment provided through local social services budgets (e.g. via direct payments) or by the Independent Living Fund are not for use in educational contexts. The Ireland report also indicates how responsibility in education and training and supports is spread between different government departments.

4.2 Eligibility criteria require students to document their disability

Although a young person may be eligible for support both as a disabled person and as a student, it is necessary in both cases to document impairment and disability and needs in order to access to additional resources (either by producing documented proof of disability status and/or by undergoing a new functional assessment of support needs in an educational context). For example, allocation of financial or technical support in Spain requires a disability certificate witnessing the level/severity of disability. In Greece, students with sensory impairments must have an accredited hearing or sight loss greater than 67% to access adapted examination arrangements, whereas those with speech difficulties or epilepsy must provide a medical certificate. In Iceland, in addition to the budget and the plan explaining why the grant is needed and how the money will be spent, young disabled people have to include in their application form a certificate of disability authorised by a physician or rehabilitation therapist. In European states school admission usually results from a multi-disciplinary assessment before decision making on support. In some countries, this assessment is carried out at school level, as for example in the United Kingdom or in Iceland, where the school head teacher is tasked to evaluate the needs of disabled students, in conjunction with input from the staff. Eligibility for educational support is, thus, generally *underpinned by an assessment*, following the professional identification of a learning difficulty (at compulsory level) or a self-declaration of disability status (at post-compulsory level).

4.3 Needs assessment procedures vary depending on the type and level of education.

In most countries, needs assessment at compulsory school level, is made by a *multi-disciplinary team* (within a special commission or a group of counselling experts) before any decision-making on a child's admission to a school, taking into account parents' choice and preference. In Norway, assessment is carried out by the educational psychology services, run by the municipalities, while in Greece it is conducted by specialised staff at public Centres of Diagnosis and Support (called 'KEDDY' in Greek) as well as other medical and educational centres that may belong to other ministries (such as Ministry of Health) but which are authorized by the Ministry of Education to work under this responsibility.



Sometimes, as in Germany or Slovenia, the commission is a more medical one, which is surprising for decision-making on education, whereas social workers, special teachers and other stakeholders are members of the commissions in other countries.

Needs assessment procedures vary depending on the type and level of education. In upper secondary vocational schooling, assessment is generally made by the school board or the teachers. It aims at measuring the individual's needs and determining possible admission as well as the necessary means (adaptations and technical support) that should be provided to address difficulties and barriers. In higher education, assessment is usually made by the University or College and aims to list the educational needs that need to be met. In other words, the purpose is to gather information on what practical measures have to be taken in meeting the student's needs for access, accommodation, technical devices, human support and other arrangements as examination conditions. In vocational training, assessments are usually made by commissions or bodies depending, for example, on the Ministry of Employment or Labour. These focus on the individual's employability and on particular skills that may be necessary in specific sectors, for example for jobs in agriculture and forestry, or the food industry. Assessment may also be impairment-specific and may lead, as for example in Austria, to channel young disabled people towards specific vocational routes or, as in the Slovak SIZZA programme, allow students to choose training opportunities corresponding to their interest. Whatever the level and sector of education, assessment and eligibility criteria for support have broadened the targeted group of the population to include, in some countries, recognition of people with very mild impairments, other social difficulties or learning difficulties.

4.4 Effectiveness of support is often laid down in an Individual Education Plan

Assessment of the support allocated to young disabled people is often formalised and framed within an Individual Education Plan (IEP) setting out academic targets and objectives, the needs to be addressed and adaptations to be made. In many countries, such as the Czech Republic, the IEP is a binding document - any school enrolling the child must implement it and will be given additional state financial resources for so doing. The Slovenian report mentions an IEP that must be rewritten annually by the same expert group in order to prepare the following school year, re-evaluated within a maximum period (it is common in other countries too for school IEPs to be reviewed within set periods, such as three years). In Portugal, as in many other countries, each IEP should be approved by the pedagogical authority and have agreement from parents or guardians.

The importance given to an IEP may differ between levels and sectors of education. In vocational training, by contrast to general upper secondary education, some countries (e.g. Austria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Portugal and the United Kingdom) require educational institutions to draw an individual training plan to determine what technical and human help and other support, such as free transportation from home to the training place, will be necessary according to the individual's training project and disability needs.

In other countries it may be included in the training or apprenticeship contract, where the contracting parties define the objectives, modes and duration of the training. As for higher education, none of the reports indicate a requirement made on universities or colleges to frame the educational support provided to the student within an IEP. The following sections outline forms of provision at different levels.

4.5 Support allocated in upper secondary education

In upper secondary education, supports are somewhat similar to those at lower levels of schooling. Although the country reports do not allow a comprehensive description of modes of funding of these different supports, they show that substantial resources are targeted to support to young disabled people and schools in an attempt to open institutions to diversity and to the empower of students and their families (see also, OECD, 1999 and European Agency country profiles).

4.6 Types of support allocated to students

Supports allocated to students may be devoted to *facilitating access to courses*. In many countries, students may receive free transportation to and from school. They may also be dedicated to *access to course content*. In Ireland, for example, they may take the form of *technical devices* provided by schools to help students with particular impairments; summer programmes are organised for students with intellectual disabilities who need more teaching. They also involve human support delivered by visiting/peripatetic teachers providing advice and assistance in relation to the education of youth with a visual or hearing impairment. In Denmark, students may receive the services of a sign language or LPC interpreter while in Sweden the support system includes, inter alia, sign language interpretation, help with reading, note-taking, proof-reading, personal assistants, specially equipped rooms, talking books and books in Braille. In Norway, students classified as having ‘sensory or movement defects, severe learning difficulties, emotional or social problems, severe multiple disabilities or other disabilities’ have the right to admission to specially prioritized programs in the first level (Vg 1). Such resources also take the form of pedagogical arrangements designed to *facilitate academic progress and success*, including a possible *extension of the course* of study, as in Norway for example where disabled students may extend the course by two years if their IEP so requires. These arrangements can also be related, as in Denmark, to the number of subjects pursued, timetable, or teaching practices.

Special examination arrangements are another form of support that several countries grant to secondary students for improving progress opportunities within upper secondary education. In Greece, for example students with severe hearing difficulties, speech difficulties or with epilepsy may pass written exams instead of oral exams whereas in Ireland, students may apply to the State Examinations Commission for examination accommodations and support. In Norway, disabled students are entitled to progress within upper secondary education without having achieved the same grades as their fellow students while in Latvia, students with mental disabilities may not take part in the state tests.



Their academic success is then measured according to the dynamics of their development and abilities. Iceland now allows for validation of short-term courses in subjects such as computer skills and accounting as upper secondary school credits.

4.7 Types of support allocated to schools

The progress and opportunities of young disabled people in upper secondary education depend also on supports given to schools. These supports may be *organizational*, such as resources for part-time education in special groups or classes, as in Iceland where students identified as having special educational needs are divided into four groups concerning their educational support. Reduced class size is another organizational means, as reported from Sweden for example (maximum class size limits, lower than the normal limit, are applied by law in some countries). Support may also include *staffing* as, for example in the United Kingdom where every school must nominate a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) who acts as the contact point and co-ordinator of provisions relating to pupils assessed with SEN in the school. In Ireland, depending on students' level of disability, schools may benefit from a weekly 'resource teaching' time allowance.

School supports can also be *methodological*. In Norway, guidance services financed by the counties are helping to prevent dropouts, while the psycho-educational support services help to diversify forms of pedagogical organisation and to differentiate teaching practices. Denmark provides special funding to schools for their assessment activities, pedagogical innovations, research and dissemination of studies. Portugal has developed a network of schools in reference to impairment groups of low incidence and high intensity of need, such as blindness, low vision, and deafness and specialised support units for students with autism or multiple disabilities.

Training for teachers and principals is another form of support to schools. In Sweden, according to the teacher training programmes all teachers have some training in Special Needs Education (SNE). In Austria, isolated specific teaching services are offered (among them 'Fortec' (research group for rehabilitation technique) at the Technical University Vienna, while the Institute for Translation Studies at Klagenfurt University has set up a working group for sign language and Deaf culture and offers, since the 2002/03, a full academic study in sign language interpretation. In Slovenia, the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2007-2013 plans to disseminate basic knowledge on inclusion and disability into educational programmes for teachers and school counsellors, whereas in Poland the standard teacher training includes only minimal knowledge of disability issues but does not constitute, according to the report, a qualification to teach students with special educational needs.

In Sweden, all young people who have finished compulsory school are entitled to three years of upper secondary education.



Upper secondary education comprises regular upper secondary school, one special school for deaf or hard of hearing students, four schools for students with mobility disabilities and a number of secondary schools for young people with learning disabilities. These special upper secondary schools are run by the municipalities with economic support from the state. In Poland, in 2008-2009 there were 3,623 students in general upper secondary schools and 1,568 in special upper secondary Schools. In Greece, there were 119 students in 5 upper secondary impairment specific schools. Iceland reports that 286 students with SEN were in upper secondary Schools or special upper secondary Schools.

The reports do not allow for reliable comparison of modes of funding among countries to foster inclusion. Nevertheless, there are numerous examples of different mechanisms. For example, the Hungarian report indicates that an additional €450 per student per year is given to schools enrolling disabled students. In Ireland, the Department of Education and Science spent a total of €900m on special education at primary and post-primary levels in 2008, showing an increase of 27% compared to 2006. In general then, the support at upper secondary level is somewhat similar to that at lower school levels and represents a substantial investment by states within their educational budgets. The situation is somewhat different, and much less consistent, at higher levels.

4.8 Support allocated in higher education

In most countries it is the responsibility of universities, rather than the public authorities, to provide disabled students with supports and arrangements empowering them to have access and to follow courses successfully. In Malta, universities may provide motorised wheelchairs or speech synthesizers, during the course of their studies, to students who don't have such equipment; in Spain universities provide sign interpreters, books in Braille, note-takers and others. In some countries non-discrimination legislation applies to provision in higher education and the state may place certain legal obligations on the universities. For example, in the United Kingdom higher education institutions (HEIs) are legally required to produce a disability equality scheme and to report annually on initiatives taken and the progress made.

By contrast, other reports indicate that universities often do not have to provide support. For example, the Finnish report mentions that while universities may make special arrangements for entrance examinations, campus accessibility and learning support, they are not obliged to provide any special educational support. In such cases, innovation in support may be developed within individual universities (e.g. on a voluntary basis) or by national bodies, in the form of independent projects or foundations. The Slovak report mentions the creation of a Centre for Support in higher education within a special project providing students, teachers and parents with help to promote students' integration:



'In the last 3 years the centre has ensured the transformation of 450 materials into alternative communication forms, prepared grammar leaving exams, including transforming exams for pupils finishing compulsory school into accessible forms and transformation of graphic materials in tactile form of accessible materials and other services since universities are not committed to provide them.'

While there may be more or less obligation to provide support, as for upper secondary education, several countries do allocate additional resources both to students and to HEIs to foster access opportunities for disabled students to higher education.

4.9 Support allocated to students

In terms of support for admission to university, some countries have opted for preferential enrolment procedures. For example, in Portugal there is a special quota of admissions to University for disabled students while in Germany disabled applicants may be granted a privileged access by the national authority responsible for the allocation of university places. In Greece, 5% of all places are reserved for disabled students whereas in Hungary, disabled students are given 50 points more for their entry exam and a similar process happens in Ireland. Norway has created a special procedure whereby disabled young adults who do not have an upper secondary school diploma can access tertiary education, the condition being that they obtain this diploma during the first semester of university studies. In the United Kingdom, further education Colleges and Universities may also provide 'access courses' to students who have not gained entry level at school, which may be targeted to social groups with low participation rates, including those with disabilities.

In countries where admission to higher education is governed by standard entrance examinations, special supports may be provided to students. Greece recently passed a law exempting SEN students who have completed upper secondary education from entrance examinations in higher education. In the Czech Republic, higher education institutions must adapt the entrance examination procedures to disabled students if they ask for it.

Once enrolled, disabled students are often entitled to the same kinds of support as disabled students in secondary education. They may have access to technical and human aids as well as pedagogical support, like photocopies of selected course materials, tape recordings and transcriptions or Braille documents as well as special examination arrangements. In Ireland, a fund for disabled students pays for adapted learning aids (e.g. computers, printers, scanners, dictaphones), human support (e.g. personal assistant, note taker, educational support, specific courses) and transportation costs. In Denmark youth eligible for special education support (SPS) are entitled to assistance and counselling for needs assessment, technological aids, interpreters, and note takers.



In terms of financial support, there are varying practices. In those countries where students have to pay high university tuition fees, disabled students generally have access to the same financial support as non-disabled students. In Norway, for example, they may, like other students, apply for a state-funded study loan from the State Bank (statens lanekasse), which will be partially transformed into a grant if they successfully pass their examinations. In countries where students finance their studies with a loan (e.g. Denmark, Norway and Sweden) if disabled students are obliged to break off their studies for health reasons their loan may be converted into a grant (although, unfortunately this is said not to apply to breaks linked with disability). Those who are enrolled full-time may also be entitled to funding to compensate for additional costs arising from disability. In Denmark, for example, the 'handicap supplement' compensates for the loss of income due to difficulties in accessing to employment during university studies for students eligible for the special education allowance, as such income would normally be necessary to pay the interest on a student's loan. In other countries where tuition fees are not very high, young disabled people may have free or reduced tuition fees as indicated in the reports of Germany, Iceland and Spain.

Financial support for students in higher education will also depend on the way in which universities are funded. In some countries, the university, after enrolling a disabled student, requests special direct state funding according to students' assessed needs. The University will then provide the supports that are necessary (as in Spain and Latvia for instance). Other countries have opted for a different administrative route, in which an extra benefit is allocated to the student who then has to organise and pay for his/her support with the help of a disability unit or disability officer.

Financial support for studying may also be impairment-specific. Some countries provide special grants to students with hearing impairments so that they may hire a sign interpreter, which is, inevitably, quite expensive (e.g. Austria and Spain). In Iceland, it is the NGOs of people with hearing impairments or visual impairments who give grants to students for their special needs. In Lithuania, youth with visual impairments may have special grants for technical devices provided either by the university or by sponsors, or by a disability organisation. According to the Slovakia report, support for disabled students is allocated by a special fund (Fund for the Support of Students with Disabilities) created by universities and funded by tuition fees, gifts, heritage and business activities. Students make an application at university level and receive a lump sum or, more frequently, a scholarship. Some reports, (Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland and Slovenia) mention also that students may be supported by sponsors.

Universities are often obliged by law to establish at least a contact person, a disability officer, co-ordinator or disabled students unit. The terms of reference of these persons vary considerably from one country to another, according to the reports, and within the same country from one university to another. All appear to provide information, especially on financial support, allowances and so on.

In some countries they also provide for accessibility and make sure that the necessary changes in the buildings have been made. They may, as in Greece and Spain, offer a real disability service and directly provide or organise with other specialised services, sign interpretation, personal assistant, note takers and act as contact person with providers of technical devices. Disability officers may also act as contact person with academic staff when the student requires adaptations in the examination procedures or in the curriculum. They may also provide guidelines and report good practices, as for example in Iceland, where the Committee for Disability at one University has issued a booklet intended to inform enrolling students about the services and resources offered at the university and what they might expect during the course of their studies. In those universities where disability co-ordinators or offices are well established and resourced they provide the key resource on which students depend for information, advice, advocacy and co-ordination of practical support. However, the existence of such support mechanisms remains very patchy and often does not exist as a general entitlement in the way that similar supports exist within the school system.

4.10 Support allocated to HEIs

Most countries support HEIs to improve their accessibility level with the exception of some countries, such as the Czech Republic where there is no legal framework for financial support. These resources may take the form of financial incentives designed to *offset the additional costs* that the presence of a student with special education needs may involve for the institution. For example, Ireland devotes 1% of the annual tertiary education budget to accommodating disadvantaged groups (including disabled students) and the *National Access Office* allocates €45.5 per hour for additional support and has adopted a per capita financing formula for impairments that are deemed priorities. National laws on higher education also mention that Universities and Colleges will be given financial state support when they have to make their buildings accessible for disabled students and for the salary costs of a disability officer or a disability unit. In Norway, for example, 5% of government maintenance allowances to universities must be used for building accessibility purposes

Financial incentives may also seek to *support pedagogical innovation, skills upgrading for institutional staff, or research* into tertiary education and training for disabled young adults. For example, Ireland's *New Strategic Innovation Fund*, created in 2006, finances projects that support an education policy to improve the quality of instruction and the academic level of students, and promote lifelong learning.

Incentives may also be of a *methodological kind*. Some reports mention networks supporting universities and colleges in improving their level of pedagogical, psychological and social accessibility like the *national bureau for disabled students (SKILL)* in the United Kingdom or the *Disability Advisers Working Network (DAWN)* in Ireland or the *Network of universities from the capitals of Europe (UNICA)* in Estonia, which works by defining a minimum standard compromise on the duties of universities towards disabled students.



Other reports, like the Netherlands, mention handbooks and websites providing teaching staff, disability advisers, students and families with information on good practices.

Once again, assessing systematically the proportional impact of resources allocated both to students and to universities and colleges is not possible with the variety of reported data. However, for example, the report of Ireland indicates that a total of 3,848 applicants were approved under the fund for disabled students in the year 2008-2009 with a total allocation of €11.74 million while in 2009-2010 5,100 applications were approved to an amount of €12.2 million, meaning an average spending of €2,400 per student. The number of disabled students deemed eligible for support nearly doubled between 2005 and 2008, and spending rose by 42% over that time to 11.6 million Euros. The number of young adults benefiting from the *fund for students with disabilities* quadrupled between 2003 and 2008 to 401 individuals, for an amount of more than EUR 3 million, i.e. a 400% increase.

According to the Danish report, practical support was received by 1,906 disabled students in 2008 for a total amount of €7.4 million, meaning an average spending of 3,800 Euros per student. Of the expenses made, 29% was used for sign language interpretation, 23% to study support hours, 18% to IT aids and 16% to study materials. The expenses for this support have been growing, and the growth from 2007 to 2008 was 19%.

According to the Estonian report, since 2001 in higher education each year up to 5 students are supported with sign language (altogether roughly 800 hours) costing around 1.4 million EEK (€89,000), and since 2005 approximately 16 students with mobility impairments have been supported with a total amount of approximately 900 thousand EEK (57,520 EUR). There have been state-commissioned places for 22 translators of sign language (700,000 EEK, i.e. €44,738). In 2009, the state budget for allowances for students with special needs in higher education was around 360,000 EEK (€23,008). Special allowances have been additionally made available in the amount of 20% of the basic allowances. The Ministry of Education and Research also foresees, through European Social Funds up to 2015, additional resources to enhance physical access to vocational education establishments, for improvement of methodology of training for students with special needs and for training the teachers. Also eLearning facilities are promoted with the help of ESF programmes. Such financial and methodological incentives have made universities more receptive to the diversity of their educational profiles but are by no means universal across European countries.

4.11 Support allocated in vocational training

Most laws and schemes on vocational training are quite recent (from 2004 onwards) which suggests a renewed commitment to training disabled people, particularly in the concern for youth who after compulsory schooling are Not in Employment, Education or Training (the so-called 'NEET' as in the UK and in Ireland) and have poor chances to find a job.



There is a broad range of vocational training provisions available in Europe. In most countries, vocational training is provided in inclusive training centres, through an apprenticeship with an employer or on-the-job training in enterprises, through internships in companies, supported employment or in sheltered workshops. Support for specifically vocational training is also more likely to be publicly regulated than student support for academic courses in universities.

Some countries have developed and maintained separate vocational training opportunities in impairment-specific training centres for youth with sensory impairments or moderate to severe intellectual disabilities who are not included in mainstream forms of vocational training, as for example Germany, Hungary, Iceland and Denmark. For example, the report from Poland notes that *'in the last recent years special job-training schools for young people with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities have been developed to enhance education opportunities for this very group of people.'* In some countries, like Finland and Lithuania, there is a tradition of linking vocation training to vocational rehabilitation, sometimes provided together in the same setting.

Vocational training aims to allow young disabled people to acquire the necessary skills for finding a job, whenever possible according to their interests and wishes. The country reports indicate different ways of documenting a trainee's skills acquired in vocational training. Some refer qualifications and diplomas (e.g. Malta) others about *'marketable partial qualification'* (Austria, Germany), *'a qualification suitable for occupation'* (Latvia), sometimes within a national *Qualifications and Credits Framework* (UK). Portugal plans to create a *'Recognition, Validation and Certification Centre'* for validating vocational training. In the Czech Republic trainees may obtain a certificate for a qualification attained in practice without formal education.

4.12 Support allocated to students

Some countries provide for vocational orientation during the last years of compulsory school as in Austria, Germany, Portugal or the Slovak Republic, thus preparing young adults for their post-compulsory school education. In Germany, services for career orientation and advice for transition from school to work offer in-depth career orientation in co-operation with special needs schools.

Support provided to students may take very different forms - allowing training as close as possible to the trainees' home, or, in other cases, in residential training centres, especially in rural areas. Trainees may have a right to free transportation and/or assistance to and from training places as, for example, in Malta.

They may also be entitled to *special arrangements for examinations or adapted forms of assessment or acknowledging of skills*. The Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland and the Slovak Republic have, for example, procedures for acknowledging practical skills gained during the training period for those students who may not acquire a state diploma.



They may also be entitled to support allowing them to *complete successfully* the training period. For example, support at the training place may be provided by special '*Clearing services*' in Austria and Germany or the OAED in Greece. Support may also be given by counsellors or personal assistants in coaching trainees at the training or work place, as in Denmark and the United Kingdom.

They may also be entitled to have an *extension of the duration of the training course*. While some countries limit this duration to 2 or 3 years, as for non-disabled trainees (Denmark, Iceland, Norway), others may allow for passing that limit without indicating how long (Austria, Germany and Sweden) in contrast with the Netherlands (7 years) and the United Kingdom (8 years). Other countries (Greece, Portugal) correlate the duration of the training with each individual's needs and training rhythms in order to include learners who need more time and young people with mild to severe disabilities.

Supports allocated to students enrolled in vocational training differ substantially from those provided to students enrolled in upper secondary or higher education. Supports may include *technical support*, provided either by the training centre or by the employer, to adapt tools, machines and the workplace to the trainee's needs. In the context of workplace training, responsibilities for adaptation may be governed by employment legislation rather than educational legislation (i.e. in the spirit of Directive 78/2000/EC, which appears rarely applied to academic post-compulsory education)

Students enrolled in vocational training may also receive *financial* support, the patterns differing according to the countries, to the type of training and to the trainees' age. Sometimes trainees receive a training allowance, from which they have to pay for their personal assistant or, in a residential training centre, for their food and accommodation. In apprenticeship, they may receive a small amount of money from their employer (e.g. in the Slovak Republic a monthly special benefit of €185 is available for disabled youth who are in training or job preparation).

Since vocational training is closely linked with the labour market, support provided to students may also include employment transitions. In most countries this is carried out within employment schemes by personal assistants, advisors, job coaches or counsellors in technical adaptation in the work place. Four reports (Austria, Germany, United Kingdom and Greece) mention specific transition services guiding trainees through the different steps of training, preparing them to meet labour market requirements and supporting them to find suitable paid employment. Continuity of support is a concern and the report from Denmark makes an additional useful remark: '*young people...also need guidance from the same adult throughout the first 2-3 years after leaving compulsory school*'.



4.13 Support allocated to training centres and employers

The reports do not provide much information on support provided to vocational training centres or schemes (and more detailed information is provided in the previous ANED country reports on employment policies). However, it appears that financial support to vocational training centres and schemes depends on the type of training. Some training centres, as in Germany and Austria, may be directly organised by firms, where training according to the type of production is provided and where these firms may receive some state incentives. Other centres exist under the responsibility of the region while several countries count impairment-specific centres with mixed financial resources from the ministry of employment and the ministry of health. Inclusive training centres may receive additional funding according to the number of trainees with disabilities enrolled. For example, the Netherlands allocate €10,000 annually to these types of training centres. In addition, financial support is also provided by European Social Fund projects in many countries. Employers who are taking on an apprentice may be given financial incentives under the different labour integration schemes in many countries. This support is intended to cover costs for the adaptation of the workplace, the trainee's salary and other costs. Very little is said in the reports about teacher training at the vocational training level or on the training of the co-workers of those who are enrolled in apprenticeship and job training schemes. This may reflect the wide variety of trainers involved and the absence of standard training in post-compulsory sectors (compared to initial school teacher training, for example).

Methodological support for training centres often relies on networks created at local level. Several reports emphasise the importance of networking between service providers, job coaches, personal assistant and the family (e.g. Austria, Denmark). Other reports provide quite extensive information on additional methodologies given by counsellors in technical adaptations, on use of assistive technical devices and on adapting the training environment.

According to most reports, existing data do not allow for a thorough assessment of the impact of resources allocated to the diversity of trainees and vocational training centres or schemes. However, more data exists in some countries. According to the report of Estonia, in 2010, vocational training schools received €1,892 per student with special needs. In Austria the Economic Chamber indicates that in 2008 there were 3,920 students with SEN taking part in an integrative training programme as apprentices; this corresponds to 2% of the total number of apprentices during that year. In Germany, in 2009 42,234 disabled persons were enrolled in vocational training schemes; in addition 17,406 were enrolled in vocational preparatory schemes or in programmes designed to assess the applicants' aptitude and employability while 23,075 were in a vocational training course in a workshop. The report from Finland mentions 15,500 young disabled people in vocational training in 2006/2007 representing 12% of all young people in such training. In Slovenia there were 180 trainees with disabilities enrolled in mainstream vocational training in 2008.



In Poland, 4,703 young disabled people were in mainstream vocational training in 2008/2009 whereas there were 26,458 in different special vocational training centres. The Netherlands are financing training centres on the basis of a budgeted tailored according to the trainee's needs, the average amount of which is 7,000 Euros a year. The available figures on students enrolled in vocational training in different countries show that a high number of young disabled people are choosing, or being channelled into, this route for gaining access to employment compared to academic studies in universities.

4.14 Summary and conclusion

The means and supports allocated for inclusion in schools, universities and vocational training vary considerably both between and within countries and types of provision. As shown in the previous chapter, inclusion opportunities have increased in all countries and at all levels of education but there is a considerable inconsistency of support. Examples of good practices described in the reports show that many of the most important initiatives are taken at local or school level. As to higher education, the reports show that in many countries universities and colleges have developed special services dedicated to admission, guidance and increased services provided to disabled students (see also, Ebersold, 2008). In vocational training, many different individual projects have been developed with the help of EU programmes, particularly financed by the European Social Fund or, as in Malta in a Leonardo programme together with Bulgaria. For example, in lower secondary education, the report of Slovenia describes a case example of part-time education for a 14 year-old autistic boy enrolled in a special school and attending an ordinary school once a week thanks to the parents' commitment to inclusion and a close co-operation with the special school. In Portugal, the Special Education Department of the Ministry of Education promoted in 2006 a publication aiming at improving quality of teaching and services in schools.

Some universities have developed special training courses for disabled students. In Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, in collaboration with University College of Cork, has developed a certificate for students with a mental impairment, offering instruction in the plastic arts, applied arts, and vocational development. In Iceland, the University of Reykjavik developed a similar programme. In Malta, the Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology (MCAST), is offering a programme, part-funded through the European Social Fund (ESF), aimed at developing the independent living skills of people with an intellectual impairment. The 'Pathways Programme' is the only one currently offering people with intellectual impairment any educational opportunities beyond compulsory school age.



5 Remaining gaps and challenges to inclusion

This chapter aims to identify key factors hindering the preparation of young disabled people to meet requirements for higher education and effective, coherent transition to work. It assumes that effective inclusion policies aimed at meeting the requirements of article 24 of the UNCRPD should:

- Be underpinned by legislation that places the goal of inclusive education on a clear statutory footing
- Entail effective and coherent financing mechanisms
- Allow for precise planning and monitoring of policies and practices
- Involve disabled persons and their families in the process
- Foster transition to work and inclusion into society.

This chapter details the many steps that are still to be made in reaching this goal.

5.1 A trend to inclusion that could be improved

The barriers and gaps faced by young disabled people may be related to contradictions in the legal framework. Although, most countries have committed themselves to inclusion, the legal framework may encompass discriminatory barriers. According the Polish report, for example, mainstream schools have no obligation *'to hire specialists to work with pupils with disabilities and support regular teachers unless they have special sections'*; the new legislation which is currently drafted may provide positive changes. In Iceland, *'assistive equipment for educational and training purposes, ceases at the age of 16, from which point individuals have to seek help from the grants available at the local Regional Offices for the Affairs of Disabled People that is, in our understanding, much more limited and restrictive'*.

Many reports highlight legal barriers impacting particularly on youth with intellectual impairments or those presenting a psychological impairment. The report from Slovenia indicates that students with intellectual impairments are hindered in accessing inclusive education by a legal framework providing that children in primary education have to meet all academic requirements, and reserving the right to a personal assistant to students with physical impairments.

The lack of appropriate educational programmes for youth with moderate, severe and profound intellectual disabilities at secondary level is underlined in several reports. For example, in Malta, there were complaints in the education sector in 2009 related to termination of a programme providing people with an intellectual impairment with the opportunity to continue with their education and to have access to training beyond compulsory schooling.



Many reports highlight specific issues raised for youth with psychical impairments as, for example, the Danish and German reports mention that this group lacks opportunities to have appropriate VET options, since neither the proposed training schemes nor training in sheltered workshops are corresponding to their needs. Barriers to education linked with schools' and universities' lack of physical access are also stressed by many reports that tend to highlight the difficulties faced by students to enter schools, move within schools' premises and enrol in the courses they would like to follow.

5.2 Prepare young disabled people to progress in education and the labour market

Progression within the education system and transition to work is hampered by the difficulties of the education systems in coping with the diversity of their educational profiles. Schools may not always provide disabled students with the academic skills required to transit from one education level to another. For example, according to the Danish report, disabled students may consider the teaching they received in public schools to be on far too low a level to provide them with the necessary knowledge in reading, writing and maths. The report from the United Kingdom mentions that despite progress made in recent years, there are still substantial gaps in attainment for pupils with SEN.

Education systems may also fail in preparing young disabled people for the requirements made by the labour market. They may have a lower access to vocational training provision. For example, the Norwegian (2+2) apprenticeship model may discourage disabled students from choosing this training path where they are required to find themselves employers who will hire them as apprentices. The Dutch report indicates that they may be hampered in accessing to VET courses by lack of assistance and support for transport during periods of internships. Supports for students seeking vocational training are very limited in Iceland and, according to the 2009 ANED on employment, only 4.4% disabled people received vocational rehabilitation (Greve, 2009). According to the German report, there is a general good will in improving access opportunities to VET, but there is no clear-cut, consistent concept of prioritizing equality and inclusion for young disabled people in the field.

Vocational training opportunities for young disabled people may be inappropriate to both their needs as well as to the employers' needs. The report from Slovenia mentions the necessity to develop integrated VET programs having close links with employers and stakeholders of the labour market. Trainees tend, for example, to have lower access opportunities to vocational training courses involving the private business sector. According to the German report, only 50% of disabled applicants are enrolled in regular in-company programmes whereas 90% of non-disabled applicants follow such VET programs. According to the Austrian report, nearly 30% of young disabled people enrolled in integrative apprenticeship schemes attained only a partial qualification and, despite incentives given to employers, only 66% of young people with training contracts are trained in private sector businesses.



Out of the 10 reports providing information on the qualification given at the end of training, only 6 indicate a qualification considered by the VET provision. This may suggest that many young disabled people in Europe finish a more or less supported vocational training without reaching the level of an official qualification, or without being considered to have reached a certification level. It will then be more difficult for them to find a job and to participate on equal level in the labour market (although they may still become effective workers because of their training).

In addition, higher education institutions may not always address employment issues in their disability policies and admission strategies. Disabled students may therefore face difficulties in combining study and work or in accessing to internships on professionally -oriented university courses compared to their non-disabled peers (e.g. in health care, human services or business related degree courses), especially in universities and colleges that have not developed close links with their labour market environment, or where services dedicated to academic support and employment support do not co-operate together.

5.3 Include transition issues in policies and practices

Progression within the education system and transition to work are hampered by policies that tend to ignore transition issues between education levels. Many countries include transition to work in their policies, but few consider the transition from lower secondary education to upper secondary education. For example, only the reports from Denmark and the United Kingdom mention requirements secondary schools to include transition planning in their individualised education plans. The Danish report highlights the need to improve transition from one education sector to another, since the problems faced by students and schools are very often only discovered after encountering a disabling or ill-adapted environment (especially for students having a learning difficulty or a psychological disorder). The Spanish report indicates the necessity to promote coordination among teachers of different levels and adequate professional counselling to allow the transit of disabled students between the various stages of education, further vocational training and workplace integration.

Current modes of funding do not generally provide an incentive for the development of a life course perspective that includes normal transitions. For example, they tend to be highly segmented (e.g. between school and university or vocational training) offering only limited possibilities for students to co-ordinate support for the pedagogical accessibility of their studies academic and their non-academic activities. This is particularly evident where personalised support comes from multiple funding sources, regulated by different Ministries, or where students seek to combine support for college-based studies with support for on-the-job training or internships.

Schools and universities pay too little attention to transition issues in their policies and strategies.



Research shows that educational institutions tend to focus on providing information on the opportunities that may exist rather than on accompanying disabled people throughout an education level, or from one level to the next. They tend to offer guidance rather than real coaching and support for entering the labour market, for example. The information provided may often be similar to that provided to the student body as a whole and lack specificity of information on the degree of accessibility of higher education institutions, on developing effective and low risk disclosure strategies, or on accessing support for accessible transportation or housing. Where abrupt changes between educational levels are accompanied by abrupt changes in the type and level of personal support there is an increase risk of failed transitions. New academic challenges may be accompanied by new responsibilities to manage information and resources for support that are not expected of non-disabled peers. Schools and colleges may also lack connections with the disability community and environment, thereby depriving disabled students of contact with supports provided by disability NGOs and transition services that could assist in effective and coherent transition processes.

As a consequence, disabled students may be particularly isolated after graduation from upper secondary school, especially when they have to move away from sources of family support that have previously compensated for the weaknesses of existing public support. Those with less visible impairments may fear to disclose their disability status when enrolling in universities to avoid peer stigma and may, therefore, be further deprived of the supports and arrangements they are entitled to. As pointed out in the Danish report, university students with a psychological condition tend to be identified only once they are enrolled, making it difficult to provide appropriate and timely supports to put them on an equal footing with other students. Students may also be hampered in transitioning to higher education or employment by difficulties in accessing timely support for accessible housing and transport, including a lack of knowledge about these issues within universities, which is particularly important for those with mobility impairments.

upper secondary schools tend to place responsibility on students for the effectiveness and quality of their next transition. Initiatives taken to foster self-advocacy skills are important in this context but may be undermined by encounters with barriers resulting from institutional obstacles on which they cannot impact. Parental involvement is assumed to be the key factor in supporting transition to tertiary education but, as often noted by the independent living movement, may introduce as many barriers as enablers to independence and autonomy in young adulthood. Transitions from school to the labour market are particularly vulnerable turning points in this respect, precipitating the loss of structured educational support services and a greater reliance on self-managed support. Preparing young disabled people to take independent living choices and responsibilities is, therefore, as important as preparing them with skills for jobs.



5.4 Develop data allowing for precise planning and monitoring of policies

Progress toward inclusive education is hampered by a lack of reliable and comparable data at national as well as at international level allowing policy makers to plan and monitor appropriately undertaken policies. Countries do not always disaggregate the data collect they collect for young disabled people and for non-disabled youth, making it difficult to determine the impact of non-discrimination legislation or the effectiveness of education and training interventions. Out of 24 reports, 6 (Greece, Latvia, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Portugal, Estonia, Cyprus) mention that no data allow for comparison of educational outcomes for young disabled people with non-disabled peers. Most of those indicating some existing data consider that these are not very reliable or are too partial. For example, there may be administrative data on the number participating in special training programmes but no data identifying young disabled people participating in mainstream schemes.

Moreover, countries tend not to be able to specify transition to work opportunities and outcomes for youth or adults with disabilities compared to the general population. As shown by ANED reports on employment and comparative indicators, data on employment may not always allow for the identification of disabled people in major surveys relevant to training and employment (e.g. national Labour Force Surveys) or provide a sufficient sample to specify the situation of disabled people in the narrow age groups most relevant to training and transition policies (e.g. those aged 16-25, 30-34, etc).

Most countries are unable to identify the pathways followed by young disabled people and the factors favouring or hindering their success in education and transition to work. Only a few countries have conducted longitudinal studies allowing for determination of the impact of policies and supports on individual pathways and academic careers. ANED work on indicators suggests that there may be some scope to develop some comparative analysis using panel survey data from EU SILC data (although sample size and cohort attrition factors may limit this). In addition, the administrative concept of disability may vary between and even within countries, depending on eligibility criteria fixed by the administrative authority or on the educational sector concerned; population samples may be mismatched or overlapping. Many reports, for example Austria and Iceland, stress therefore the need to collect longitudinal data.

Few countries know how effective key technical, financial or human supports really are, in terms of outcomes for young disabled people. There are very scarce data providing information on academic achievements and the prospects of disabled students enrolled in secondary or higher education. Equally scarce are reports presenting analyses of the data that does exist on these impacts. The report from Norway notes, for example, the lack of data on transition outcomes from education to work and the few existing research programs dealing with this issue.



It is relevant to note that comparative qualitative longitudinal research may also be useful in identifying specific barriers and tracking young people's choices and chances in different national policy contexts (e.g. as in a new academic new study recently sponsored by the European Science Foundation).

This pervasive lack of data presents an obstacle to defining and implementing effective inclusive education and training policies at a time when they are prioritised within the new EU2020 Strategy but when funding resources for national research are becoming scarcer and need to be used as cost effectively as possible. The lack of accurate knowledge about the number and profile of young disabled people produces much uncertainty about the way in which the funding allocated to policies is used. The lack of data on the impact of policies and the career paths of disabled young people precludes any true appreciation of the value added by inclusion policies on the quality of teaching and support practices, and consequently on the optimisation of disabled students' admission. Barriers hindering transition from one education level to another and to employment become only very indirectly apparent, for example via the evident increase in the number of young adults with disabilities who are in receipt of income allowances or the number of unemployed and inactive persons with disabilities later in life.

5.5 Improve the quality of support arrangements

Despite important financial efforts made by states to promote education for all, support may not always be very effective in practice and many reports highlight the increasing difficulties that are arising through the financial and economical downturn many countries face. The report of Ireland, for example, mentions that the Government has deferred the implementation of the Disability Act 2005 and the Education Act 2004 as originally planned due to financial pressure (although remaining committed to the full implementation of this legislation in the future). At a time of increasing pressure on financial resources and public services, the quality and effectiveness of funded interventions becomes ever more important.

5.6 Support allocated to individuals

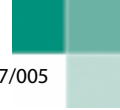
At the individual level, young disabled people often lack appropriate information while access to support may not be as easy as it should be (e.g. the Spanish report notes that scholarship plan and financial aids should be more available to all disabled students). Supports for inclusion may not always be accessible to students with the most severe impairments or complex needs. For example in higher education, eligibility criteria for intensive support may require students to be enrolled full-time and therefore to exclude those opting for the greater flexibility of part-time study. It is essential that students taking part-time and flexible learning routes are entitled to an equivalent level of financial and practical support as those following full-time and college-based programs.



Eligibility criteria for support in some countries are restricted only to certain groups of students, as in Slovenia where children with intellectual disabilities do not have the right to a personal assistant (by contrast with those having physical disabilities) or in Norway, where students with learning difficulties enrolled in higher education are not entitled to adapted books. They may also be restricted to support only for pedagogical issues and students, especially those who are Deaf or blind, may become isolated from their non-disabled peers if sign language interpreters or guides are not available during non-teaching periods. There is a need to ensure that support for disabled students and trainees is available to all disabled students, that it is personalised and that it is co-ordinated to facilitate inclusion in all aspects of the student experience.

Financial support allocated to students may not cover the additional costs associated with disability. Greece indicates, for example, that there is no financial assistance for pupils or disabled students in terms of allowances, direct payments or budgets for support workers or personal assistants, while the Norwegian report notes that disabled students tend to face financial difficulties. Systems of student financial support may not include the additional time some students require due to the disability and the inadequacy of supports they receive (e.g. disabled students may be permitted to extend their studies by one or two extra years but then graduate with greater financial debts for fees and living costs compared to their non-disabled peers, as reported in Norway for example). In higher education, for example, reforms undertaken within the Bologna process tend to accelerate normal academic rhythms and increase students' workload. For some disabled students, in particular, there may be increasing risks of fatigue and difficulties in accessing timely pedagogical supports (especially the timely production of alternative text formats for those with vision impairments). It is important that financial support packages for individual disabled students cover the additional costs and time they require.

Technical and human supports are often inadequate or inappropriate to students' needs. The Slovak report highlights, for example, architectural barriers, limited access to literature in alternative forms, and inappropriate supports and arrangements to enable students to enter a doctoral study program (the entry level training for an academic or scientific career). Thus, even where sufficient financial resources are provided to students, at the individual level, it is equally necessary to ensure that they can capitalise on those resources in an enabling institutional environment. As mentioned previously, individual learning supports and arrangements may also fail to empower students to face personal life challenges as young disabled adults, for example the report from Estonia notes student fears about not to be able to cope, while the Dutch report notes that few disabled students have a full knowledge of their rights to equal treatment. There is a need to consider how individualised transition support can equip students and trainees with skills not only as 'learners' but *as young disabled people*. There may be a particular role for personal support and mentoring from older disabled adults in disability or independent living NGOs in this context.



5.7 Support allocated to educational institutions

Support allocated to educational institutions is being constrained by the economical downturn in many countries. Funding may, therefore, not grow according to the increasing number of students attending upper secondary schools and higher education. For example, the report of the Czech Republic notes that funding given to schools is not legally guaranteed and, since schools may have to meet the costs of providing personal assistants or assistant teachers, parents may have to pay or even to provide for a personal assistant. In higher education, this may be particularly counterproductive and penalise those institutions that have been most innovative and sensitive to enrolling and supporting disabled students, on a voluntary basis, and that will face extra costs.

5.8 Improve the quality of teacher training

Quality of teacher training as well as personal assistants and senior teachers is a key concern highlighted in the country reports. Many indicate that teachers do not feel sufficiently trained and equipped to respond to the pedagogical challenges they may have to face. For example, the report from Denmark notes that schools may find it difficult to provide teachers with sufficient creative dialogue and supervision skills in relation to the often very great demands that are made on their professional skills by providing equal opportunities for disabled students. Some reports, such as the Polish report, note that specialists (among them supportive teachers employed in integrated schools and sections) are under qualified. The pedagogical training of teachers in higher education is particularly vulnerable, since many are not required to complete initial training analogous to that of school teachers, and may have little or no direct experience of accommodating disabled students in their course provision.

The lack of clear strategies, as noted in Sweden for example, may also be a limitation to inclusive schooling: there is a lack of clearly formulated and proven strategies for equal participation for pupils with disabilities among school principals etc. and strategies are not embedded among the staff. Despite good intentions there exist obvious difficulties in adapting the learning environment to individuals' needs. According to reports in the United Kingdom, the quality of work to improve the literacy skills of disabled students is inconsistent and SEN teaching tends to be of *'varying quality, with a high proportion of lessons having shortcomings'*.

Disability issues are rarely addressed fully as part of the general curriculum of initial university training for school teachers. For example, the report of Poland mentions that the current legislation on teacher training includes only minimal knowledge of disability issues and that teachers in mainstream schools receive no specific training in disability, unless they complete post-graduates courses. In Latvia, disability issues are included in the general curriculum of university training for school teachers but count for only two credits whereas the report from Iceland notes that some courses or units include special needs issues but not extensive training.



The report from Sweden comments that it is unclear what teacher training in Special Needs Education (SNE) really involves, while according to the Portuguese report, only 40% of teachers in mainstream schools have undertaken training on special education.

Special needs teacher training may vary amongst higher education institutions. The report from Lithuania notes that not all higher education institutions provide primary grade or subject teachers with the courses on special needs education they ought to have. According to the report from the Czech Republic, *'the content and scope of the curriculum of special needs training for teachers in classes/schools for children, pupils or students with special educational needs (with disabilities) varies according to the type of teacher education institution (Faculties of Education) and the type of study'*.

In many countries, training on inclusive education is only provided in continuing training targeting teachers who express an interest or a need on this issue. In Ireland, such training is provided as part of the Special Education Support Service (SESS) created by the Ministry of Education and Science or as part of a master's programme in special education needs, or graduate courses offered by certain universities. In Austria, by completing a number of further education modules, teachers can obtain an enhanced teaching qualification. In a number of provinces, all schools already dispose of at least one teacher with such a certification. There is a need to critically examine the coverage and quality of adaptive pedagogical and disability equality components provided in initial training for teachers and trainers in schools, vocational training colleges and higher education.

In many countries, personal assistants also lack training. In Norway, there are no training requirements to become a teacher's assistant (except a certificate of conduct from the police). In Malta, according to a research report (Pisani), facilitators tended to be unqualified and lacked adequate training and/or experience (as a consequence, courses have recently been established for giving them training and certification). Since classroom assistants have a substantial input to the learning experience of some disabled pupils, this area of training development must be seen as important.

The lack of training in inclusive education, and its inconsistency, exposes young disabled people to the risk of prejudices and low expectations on the part of teachers and may deny them the opportunities to develop the academic skills needed for tertiary education. For example, according to research in the Slovak Republic, *'students with disabilities were implicitly "pushed" to study social and helping disciplines (e.g. psychology, sociology, social works, nursing, pedagogy). There was a somewhat general attitude that natural or technical disciplines were not appropriate for them and that they were pre-determined for social and helping disciplines because of their first-hand living experience'*. Teachers may be reluctant to change their teaching practices, especially when they have difficulty in identifying students with specific learning difficulties as persons who need special pedagogical arrangements and support.



Their expectations of disabled students may be less than those for other students, and as a result the diploma obtained does not always reflect students' real level of knowledge or capability. This lack of training in inclusive education also undermines the transition to tertiary education where it is mirrored in a lack of knowledge or prejudices amongst professionals involved in defining and implementing the transition process. There is, therefore, a need to consider the skills and training of all those involved in transition planning for young disabled people.

5.9 Increase the quality of cooperation among stakeholders

Transition beyond lower secondary education may also be impeded by a lack of synergies between stakeholders involved in the educational process. This lack of synergies is due, in large part, to the *compartmentalisation* that exists between different education levels and between the education system and other systems involved in the support of disabled youth. For example, lack of linkages between lower and upper secondary schools, between upper secondary and higher education, and between education and work, is a major obstacle to the continuity and coherence of the academic and skills career. This lack of synergies is related to the absence of structural co-operation between schools, other supportive agencies, the labour market environment and the family. This lack of co-operation reinforces a sharp break between administrations dealing with young disabled people and those responsible for supporting and assisting adults, for example. It reinforces the compartmentalisation between bodies responsible for accessibility at secondary and tertiary education level and those who define eligibility for support in daily life related to disability or to non-academic activities. It frequently requires students and their families to navigate and contact many agencies in order to obtain the supports and arrangements they are entitled to. According to the Norwegian report, for example, co-ordination of services is a major problem for young people, especially in regard to the transition from school to work, despite arrangements for career guidance and vocational rehabilitation. The report from Finland also mentions considerable differences in provision between different municipalities, whereas the Slovak report stresses barriers to education arising from compartmentalisation between different stakeholders in charge of funding students and schools. Adequacy and effectiveness of transitional support, therefore, requires greater attention to the interfaces between the diverse sources of funding and practical help available to individuals in transitions.

5.10 Develop high quality piloting tools

Transition beyond lower secondary education tends to be hindered by a lack of piloting tools and evaluations to ensure quality of supports and processes. Understanding the real implications of complex processes often depends on knowledge gained from individual case studies or the retrospective accounts of those who experienced them.



Some reports stress weaknesses in the needs assessment procedures. According to the report of the United Kingdom, expectations of achievement for SEN children are low or insufficiently well defined, while the report of Slovenia notes that children are assessed by experts who usually do not know the child and that parents have little or no influence in the placement decision. The report of Portugal mentions the lack of a rigorous system of referral and identification of needs, whereas the Estonian report indicates that the curricula young disabled people may follow do not always correspond to their choice.

Many reports note inequalities amongst different groups of young disabled people that require further investigation in evaluating differential impacts and outcomes. Some note an over-representation of those with an ethnic minority background while others note the general trend that boys are more likely to receive SEN labels at school than girls and are more likely to be identified as having behaviour, emotional and social difficulties or autistic spectrum conditions. It mentions in addition that children from a disadvantaged background – notably those eligible for free school meals (those from low income households) or from an underperforming ethnic groups – are much more likely to be identified as having SEN.

Some reports highlight also weaknesses in the implementation of policies and strategies at management level. For example, according to the report of the United Kingdom, many teachers did not know if their school or college had a disability equality scheme or if disabled people had been involved in its preparation (a national legislative requirement). In addition, schooling is not always, as in Ireland, rooted in an IEP or IEP aims are too vaguely defined to determine appropriate support, evaluate progress or to include transition issues. When no IEP has been drawn up, schools face greater difficulties in building transition processes that allow young adults to make knowledgeable choices about subsequent courses of study or to match skills with the demands of the labour market or tertiary education. For example, according to the report of Norway, modes of funding in higher education are uncertain because they are not always able to follow the plan, while the Dutch one mentions that quality of education is insufficiently assessed. Without effective assessment and planning, educators lack the overall view needed to allow for a holistic approach to the education process and to build, as suggested by research, a dynamic involving the family and other stakeholders in the transition process. There is a need, therefore, to understand more clearly how needs assessment procedures and tools are used and how affective they are implemented. This would allow transition plans to provide a basis for holistic support at life course moments of greatest vulnerability for young disabled people.



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Appendix 1

Questions addressed by the ANED country experts in the national reports

What are the main policies that provide choices for disabled people to study and learn in inclusive settings? What major policy changes have occurred in recent years? Which Ministries are involved (e.g. are there different responsibilities for inclusion in academic education versus employment training policies? Are the health authorities involved in education of disabled children, etc?)

To what extent are disabled children and young people recognised in your national laws, policies and strategies as having equal rights to lifelong learning (e.g. in schools, further education, higher education, or adult education)?

Are education and training providers required by law to provide accessibility of environments and learning materials for disabled children and young people (e.g. which laws apply and what do they require?). Do these rights also apply to learning opportunities for disabled people after the compulsory schooling age? (e.g. for people who are older than 16, 18, 24, etc).

Are education and training providers required by law to provide individualised support for disabled children young people (e.g. which laws apply and what do they require?). Do these rights apply equally to learning opportunities beyond the compulsory schooling age?

In all countries (except Slovakia) the Education Act provides for an assessment as a pupil with SEN which leads to the drawing up of on Individual Education Plan (IEP) and to special financing.

There is a general complaint that this does not happen beyond compulsory education.

Are there any significant new proposals or strategies for future policies to support disabled children and young people?

Where have new ideas come from, about inclusive education and training, and who has helped to move the policy forward? (e.g. have disabled people's organisations been important in this process? Are there any groups that are campaigning or lobbying for policy change to promote equality in education?)

How does the current state-of-the-art in your country compare with the expectations of the UN Convention? Has the Convention had any impact in discussion of reform to education and training policies?

What are the main grants, allowances, bursaries available to disabled students and trainees for the purposes of their education and training?



Please consider the practical assistance that is available to young disabled people learning in any of the main education and training contexts (e.g. post-compulsory schooling, colleges, universities, government training schemes, employer-based training schemes).

What kind of equipment or environmental adaptations can be provided for students and trainees, and who is entitled to them (e.g. refer back to Section 4.2 or explain if different)?

Who provides this type of equipment or adaptation for disabled students? How is this organised? (e.g. does specialist equipment belong to the student, the college or the funder? Can disabled students control their own financial budgets for equipment? How does this work?)

Who decides what equipment or adaptation each student receives, and how is this assessment done? (e.g. is there a limit to the available funding for this equipment or adaptation?)

How many people are benefiting from this type of equipment or adaptation?

Is there any published evidence about the equity or effectiveness of equipment or adaptations provided for the purposes of education and training?

Would this type of equipment/adaptation be available to a disabled student who was studying in another country as part of their course?

Would this type of equipment/adaptation be available to a disabled student from another country who was studying in your country?

Please use this section to describe one example of good practice in supporting disabled students/trainees to have equal learning opportunities in mainstream education, training or learning environments. This could be an example of new arrangements to include a group of disabled students who were previously excluded from this type of learning. It could be an example of a single learning institution, or a national policy, or the introduction of a new support scheme. We would be particularly interested in examples of creativity in the use of available resources that might be useful for other countries.

We are also interested in any examples about the transferability of support for students between EU/EEA countries. We are interested in an example that is supported by evidence from research or evaluation to support your claims about its quality, outcomes, costs or benefits.