

Education Policies for Students with Disabilities – Analysis and Perspectives

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Abstract

In education, finding ways to meet the learning needs of pupils with disabilities can be a challenge, especially in schools, regions and countries with limited resources. Inclusive education, which fully involves all pupils, including students with disabilities or children with other learning difficulties, has proven particularly effective in helping all students to learn, even if challenges remain in implementing systems intended to support them. We have analyzed in this work the implementation of inclusive education policies in ten European countries. The strategies and recommendations of the education practices adopted by each state can be useful for an analysis and improvement of the Romanian system of inclusive education. Romanian education has made real progresses in recent years in adopting appropriate strategies for the inclusion of people with disabilities, both from a legislative point of view and from the point of view of civil society involvement. There are, however, countless issues that require special attention and that can be improved.

Keywords: disability, inclusive education, strategies, education policies

Introduction

The aim of educating children with disabilities is the same as that of educating children without disabilities, namely: supporting children in reaching their full potential and leading toward harmonious integration into society. For many children with disabilities, this means receiving specialized support or special education to address the individual learning needs and differences of pupils. Approaching an inclusive education is substantial but requires time, political will and an understanding of the benefits of inclusive education for all pupils. The need for personal development can be satisfied by using resources related to education, the organization of leisure time, within various institutions, at the workplace and so on.

The objectives of Education for all and the new sustainable development goals, which include pupils with disabilities as part of Objective 4 ("Ensuring inclusive and fair quality education and promoting learning opportunities for all"), can only be achieved if the global needs of children with disabilities are taken into account (UNESCO, 2017). In other words, international best practices in the field of inclusive education should be taken into account, based on experiences gained at national level.

The right to education for all children is a goal that has taken shape in all countries that currently have laws or regulations specifically designed to ensure equal opportunities for the education of children with disabilities. Even under these conditions, the quality and details of these laws vary significantly.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities states that *disability* is a concept that constantly evolves and results from the interaction of people with disabilities and attitudes and environmental benchmarks that could hinder their participation in society on an equal basis with others. The same Convention includes among people with disabilities those suffering from long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disorders (United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities, 2006). Currently, the countries that have ratified this convention are developing new policies and reforming their education systems to align and comply with the treaty.

Similarly, there is no single concept of inclusive education that applies in all contexts. It is crucial to consider inclusive education a "less restrictive environment" for children with disabilities (Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities). Regarding the access to education for persons with disabilities, 2016 General comment No 4 was adopted by the CRPD-UN Committee on Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the Right to Inclusive Education. The document States that the right to education of persons with disabilities can be actually and effectively ensured through inclusive education, integration into mass education, eliminating segregation.

UNESCO aims specifically at ensuring equal access to education and professional training for vulnerable people. Today, however, majority of the most marginalized groups remain invisible in educational data at global and national level. These include children and adults with disabilities, those displaced due to armed conflicts, children, soldiers and workers, and nomadic populations. This created the International Observatory on Equity and Inclusion in Education to encourage and develop the necessary methodologies, guidelines and research and to build a global repository of data and standards to measure equity in education. This information is vital to help countries, UN (United Nations) partners and civil society groups to reach the most marginalized groups effectively.

Key objectives of the Observatory:

- Production of methodological guides to measure equity throughout the life cycle;
- Encouraging a research agenda to develop a comprehensive framework for measuring equity in education;
- Communicating robust and relevant, internationally comparable data to better target research and policies (<http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/equity-education>, <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/ip60-use-of-uis-data-and-emis-to-monitor-inclusive-education.pdf>)

The European Union aims to ensure quality which involves a systematic review of education offer in order to maintain and improve its quality, equity and efficiency. This includes school self-assessment, external evaluation (including inspection), teacher and school leaders' assessment and pupils' evaluations. The development of strong quality assurance systems is crucial to support high quality, inclusive education in a European area of education. It is also important to support the implementation of the 2018 Council Recommendations on key competences for lifelong learning and the promotion of common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching.

Moreover, quality assurance is vital to create the conditions for facilitating students mobility across Europe, in particular through increased transparency and trust. (https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/school/quality-assurance_en).

International policies and frameworks for inclusive education

International laws and legal frameworks, such as the CRPD, describe human rights and the legal requirements to observe these principles. Of these, we will summarize the international policies ratified in European states, including Romania:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Adopted in 1989, Article 23 specifically approaches the rights of children with disabilities and states that they have the right to special care, education and training, aimed at providing them with the maximum possible autonomy, a full and active life in society, and that they should receive "special care and encourage and ensures, to the extent available, on request, for children with disabilities who meet the conditions provided for and those who care for them, help tailored to the situation of the child and to the situation of the parents or those to whom he/she is entrusted". The Committee on the Rights of the Child specifies that inclusive education, not segregated education systems, must be the objective of educating children with disabilities. (<https://www.salvaticopiii.ro/sci-ro/files/c7/c7657ec7-318f-4481-967c-e6b5d9a41258.pdf>)

Salamanca Statement

Adopted in 1994 at the World Conference on education with special needs, the framework for action in Salamanca highlights the need to educate children with disabilities within the general education system. This statement urges governments and the international community to support inclusive education as the best approach to educating children with disabilities. The statement insists on access to education in sign language in the national language.

United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2006)

Adopted in 2006, the Convention provides a comprehensive international legal framework for supporting the educational rights of children with disabilities. Countries that have ratified this convention must ensure an inclusive education system at all levels, and children with disabilities have the right to free primary and secondary education and cannot be discriminated on the basis of their disability.

Other requirements relating to the education of persons with disabilities provided for are:

- all schools must be physically accessible, to transportation, as well as access to information and media (Article 9 Accessibility);
- have access to inclusive, quality free primary education and to secondary education, on an equal footing with others in the communities in which they live;
- schools should respond to the academic, social and living needs of each pupil;
- if necessary, alternative learning methods such as braille instructions or alternative communication devices should be used;

- facilitating the learning of the sign language and promoting the linguistic identity of people with hearing disabilities;
- ensuring of education for children who are blind, deaf or with deaf-blindness, by the most appropriate and individualized languages, ways and means, as well as in environments conducive to maximum social and educational development (Article 24 Education from the Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities, MO 792/26 November 2010).

The Action Plan set out in **the Incheon Declaration (2015)** to combat exclusion, marginalization and inequality of access to education for persons with disabilities. This aims to eliminate disparities in access to and outcomes of education for persons of different genders, persons with disabilities, children in vulnerable situations and children from indigenous groups by 2030. Access to tertiary, university, vocational and adult education is again an important objective in ensuring equal opportunities for persons with Special Educational Needs (SEN) (UNESCO, 2015).

National policies for inclusive education

Once a country has taken on the concept of inclusion, it is important to adapt its national policies and laws. The education of children with disabilities and the importance of inclusive education are best integrated into the country's overall strategic education plan, with the implementation strategies reflected in the national education strategic implementation plan. In this way, commitment to inclusive education is clearly reflected in national protection and strategic planning in general, included in the education budget and recognized in bilateral and multilateral partners with funding agencies. According to the key principles having an impact on education in the UNESCO Policy Guidelines, an inclusive education system can only be created if ordinary schools become increasingly inclusive.

The UNESCO Policy Guidelines highlight the following principles of inclusive education:

- Inclusion and quality are mutual;
- Access and quality are linked and mutually consolidating;
- Quality and equity are essential for ensuring inclusive education.

The international conference on "Inclusive education: a way to promote social cohesion" held in 2010 under the Spanish presidency proposed the following actions in line with the UNESCO political guidelines:

- Promoting innovative programs and supporting the community in its capacity to identify children, young people and adults outside school, in order to integrate them into school, education and training programs;
- Ensure that policies reflect legal rights and target disadvantaged children;
- Conducting mass-media awareness campaigns, posters, conferences and training.

In line with the UNESCO political guidelines for inclusion in education, national legal frameworks should achieve the following:

- Recognize inclusive education as a right;

- Identification of minimum standards regarding the right to education, including physical access, communication, social and economic access, early identification, curriculum adaptation and individualized support for pupils;
- Identify minimum standards on the right to education and ensure that families and communities participate actively in inclusive education;
- Providing a transition plan for pupils with disabilities;
- Identification of interested persons and their responsibilities;
- Providing resources for persons with disabilities;
- Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure implementation of inclusive education (UNICEF,2017)

Part thereof have been applied in Romania too, but not at the desired level.

In addition, successful national inclusive education policies provide explicit guidance to the interested parties and implementers.

Adaptation and modification of the national curriculum

National policies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities should explicitly specify that pupils should have access to national curriculum. In the education of pupils with disabilities in special schools, emphasis is particularly placed on the development of life skills (self-service rules and personal hygiene) and the general curriculum for special schools includes literacy and mathematics skills but at a level adapted to each category of children with disabilities. At the level of mass schools where children with special needs are included, however, we must admit that not all pupils with disabilities can access the national curriculum equally and the curriculum should be modified and adapted to promote individualized training. Although this is specified at the legislative level, in practice curriculum adaptation is only carried out in a very small percentage.

Access to assistive technology

Technology assistive devices can help pupils access information and be successful in the classroom. According to the latest studies, children in low-income countries have access to assistive technologies and devices in a percentage of less than 15% or use highly obsolete technologies. In these countries, funding for assistance from NGOs supporting the education sector may be a way of obtaining this equipment.

Individualized education plans

Individualized education plans were established in the United States in 1970 and became an integral part of special education strategies in many countries. IEPs are ideally developed in a multidisciplinary process involving parents, teachers, directors, pupils, as well as other relevant employees and service providers.

Redefining National Education Plans

Strong national policies and legislation are an important step toward ensuring education in an inclusive environment for children with disabilities. However, legislation is not an end in itself and political and legal frameworks need to be transposed into practice at school level. Strong national plans related to inclusive education supported by educational programs ensure

the transition from a segregated education system to an inclusive one. Of course, the extent to which education plans are implemented depends on a number of factors, including funding levels, teacher engagement, motivation and availability, guidance on how to adapt curricula, access to assistive devices and, last but not least, monitoring and support for service providers. These context-specific challenges should be addressed in the transition plan. Depending on the country and strategic plan, most of the initial strategic plans address 10-20-year periods.

According to the WHO World Report on disabilities, National Education Plans for all should:

- reflect international commitments to the right of children with disabilities to be educated;
- identify the number of children with disabilities and assess needs;
- emphasizes the importance of parental support and community involvement;
- plan key supply issues such as access to school buildings and the development of curricula, methods and teaching materials that meet a diverse range of needs;
- increase capacity by extending the regulations and training programs;
- increase capacity by extending the regulations and training programs;
- make sufficient funding available;
- perform, monitor and evaluate and improve qualitative and quantitative data on pupils (World Report on Disability, WHO, 2011, pg. 217, 218)

Understanding the systemic approach to inclusion in European countries

1. Ireland – Department of Education and Skills

The latest statistics in 2019 say there are 114 special schools, but there are also pupils in the inclusive system. Thus, there were 8035 pupils and 1435 teachers in special education, and in mass education there were 6882 pupils and 2406 pupils with disabilities in secondary school, and a total of 13530 specialized teachers for pupils with disabilities. In general, the education offered to children with special needs is given in: special schools, special classes in normal schools and integrated into classes in mass education.

Reason for inclusion: it is a key strategic objective of the Department of Education and pursues the progress of learners with special educational needs by supporting them to reach their full potential. The school inclusion model is a new model of support for pupils with special education and additional care needs. It reflects the activity of education partners to ensure that any pupil or students who could fight for education receives the best possible support (<https://www.education.ie/en/>, <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Key-Statistics/education-indicators-for-ireland-2020.pdf>).

2. Finland – Ministry of Education and Culture

In Finland, there is a good idea to follow: the faster the student receives assistance, the easier it is to prevent the accrual of problems. It is also important that support for children is provided smoothly when switching from child education and care to pre-primary education and pre-primary education to secondary school, as well as during the different stages of education.

In order to identify the needs of the pupil and to ensure successful planning and delivery of support, it is important that there is good collaboration with the pupil and with the parents or guardians of the pupil. Support granted to the pupil must be flexible, based on long-term

planning and adjustable when his/her need changes. Different forms of support are used both individually and to complement each other. The support shall be made available as long as necessary and to the extent that the pupil needs it. The three levels of support for learning and participation in school are: general support, improved and with special needs. Of these, a pupil can receive only one level of support at a time. The different forms of support are remedial instructions, part-time special needs education, school assistants services and special support. With the exception of special needs education based on a special needs education orientation, all different types of support can be used each at all three levels of support.

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is established for the pupil, which should detail how teaching and other support is provided in the decision on the provision of special needs support services. Support for special needs consists of education for special needs and other (possibly medical) support required by the pupil, as referred to in the Law on Basic Education. Special needs education and other support received by the pupil form a functional and systematic entity where the support of the child's parents or guardians, as well as multi-professional cooperation and individual guidance are all important.

(<https://minedu.fi/en/support-for-learning-and-school-attendance>)

3. Italy — Ministry of Education, Universities and Research

There are a number of Italian and international regulations on educational integration. They believe that disability is due to the interaction between the functional deficit of the person and the social context. The Italian specificity is emphasized by Law 18 of 2009, which provides that forms of school integration should be carried out in common classes, so that educational institutions, in their functional and organizational autonomy, prepare the conditions and carry out the useful activities to determine the educational success of all pupils.

The school is considered to be an educating community, which welcomes every student in their daily effort to build relational conditions and pedagogical situations that allow their maximum development. A school must not only know but also grow, by acquiring knowledge, skills and autonomy, by specific interventions to be implemented against the constant and essential background of education and socialization. These guidelines collect a number of directives aimed, in line with school autonomy and current legislation, at improving the integration process of pupils with disabilities. They identify, however, a number of critical issues that have arisen over the past few years in daily teaching practice and propose possible solutions to guide the work of inspectorates, school directors and collegiate bodies within the limits of their own competences. Thus, in the Italian education system, there is the integration of pupils with special needs in both normal and special classes that are in mass education.

(www.miur.gov.it/alunni-con-disabilita)

4. Greece – Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture and Sport

It appears that there are only special schools in Greece and there is a lack of information on the inclusion of pupils with disabilities. By visiting the official website of the education ministry, we see that there are no statistics on inclusion, but only news about the setting up of new special schools and vocational high schools for pupils with disabilities. There is also cooperation through the Erasmus program, called: "Improving the inclusion capacity of educational organizations/institutions providing VET with information and communication technologies (ICT)", in which the Special Education Directorate of the Ministry of Education

participated as a partner in a strategic partnership between organizations from 5 countries Greece, Germany, Sweden, Portugal, Finland (<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/>, <https://www.minedu.gov.gr/eidiki-agwgi-2/sxoleia-eidiki-ekpaideusi-5>).

5. Slovenia – Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport

The country's ministry of education is seeking to ensure appropriate adjustments and assistance to children and adolescents with special needs to help them meet their knowledge goals and standards and develop their potential. The majority of children with special needs benefit from education in regular kindergartens and basic and secondary schools, where they are offered various forms of assistance. The organization and implementation of the programs are adapted to their needs and additional assistance is provided by experts. Some children and adolescents need more assistance and are therefore included and educated in programs tailored in the development kindergarten departments, basic schools with tailored education program and educational institutions for children and adolescents with special needs. Kindergartens and schools prepare an individualized program that defines all forms of assistance for every child with special needs.

They consider that at the basis for education with special needs is the individual child or adolescent with certain deficiencies and development needs thereof. The organization and forms of educational work are adapted to every child and adolescent who needs it and additional forms of assistance are provided to each child and adolescent by a decree of special needs.

Aware of the fact that a deficiency, a barrier or a disorder is only part of the identity of children with special needs, Slovenians also take into account the fact that these children also have many skills and potential. The aim is therefore to support and develop equal opportunities for education and training for all children with different special needs.

The objectives and principles in education with special needs are more broadly defined than in general education. The aim is to:

- ensure the greatest possible benefit to the child;
- the integrity and complexity of education;
- equal opportunities, while taking into account the diversity of children's needs;
- including parents, adoptive parents and legal guardians in the placement process and determining forms of assistance;
- an individualized and interdisciplinary approach;
- maintaining the balance between the different aspects of the child's physical and mental development;
- an early placement in an appropriate education program;
- immediate and continuous support and specialized assistance in educational programs;
- a vertical transition of programs and the coherence thereof;
- providing education in a location closest to the child's home;
- ensuring the conditions adequate for the optimum development of every child.

(<https://www.gov.si/en/policies/education-science-and-sport/special-needs-education>)

6. Luxembourg – Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training

The mission statement of the Ministry of Education in Luxembourg is: "Every child and every young person has the right to be accompanied personally so that they can develop their skills and develop fully." One of the priorities of the Luxembourg government is to guarantee

that children and young people with specific educational needs receive schooling in the "regular" school system and participate in youth reception structures and activities where this inclusion is possible and desired by parents.

In the Grand Duchy, the percentage of pupils enrolled in specialized centers is less than 1%, which is evidence of a high level of inclusion. As they claim, a child or a young person with special needs (SSE) has a more difficult learning time than most pupils of the same age or has specific disabilities or difficulties. His/her support cannot be provided solely by the means normally available to the teacher or assisting educator. These needs may relate in particular to needs related to motor disability, visual disability, language or hearing disability and cognitive development or behavior problems. When a pupil at school has specific needs and, for example, has difficulties in keeping up with the normal pace of lessons, different support measures can be offered. They are tailored to their individual needs and learning difficulties. In nurseries and kindergartens (education and reception services – SEA) and within activities for young people (youth centers, holiday and leisure activities for children and young people), special attention is also given to children with special needs. The inclusion of children and young people with special needs covers a wide variety of areas, such as: education and training (basic, secondary, vocational, higher, music, for adults); education and reception services (SEA - nurseries or kindergartens); youth activities such as the Youth Center, holiday and leisure activities (<https://men.public.lu/fr/themes-transversaux/eleves-besoins-specifiques.html>)

7. Poland - Ministry of National Education

Education for everyone - understanding for every child, student and his/her family.

The Polish Ministry of Education and Science is working on a new and better support formula for a child, a pupil (especially with disabilities) and his/her family. They are guided by the idea that every child should have guaranteed help, including psychological and educational support tailored to his or her needs. Psychological counseling, pedagogical and special institutions play an important role among their proposals. There are no plans to liquidate them, so they aim to improve the quality of education for all pupils, including those with disabilities.

The Polish Government aims to implement certain services in such a way as to facilitate education, social inclusion and social integration. They want to intervene from the moment the child's development defects are found during the fetal period, to support him/her at school, to the time he/she enters adult life and the labor market. The aim is to prepare an early support system for child development and support for parents. The children's and family centers (CDR) are to monitor the diagnosis of the child's needs and the preparation of support for him/her and his/her family. Every child, a student, must be guaranteed psychological and pedagogical assistance at school and at institution, which will be adapted to his or her needs. Specialists in the field of psychological and pedagogical assistance must be present in Polish schools. Polish consider that the current system is not perfect and needs to be adjusted and working on the standards of employment of a psychologist, special educator, vocational counselor and engaged in educational establishments. Schools and institutions must have sufficient resources to finance the hiring of specialists. A detailed calculation of the costs of the different variants of their employment is currently being carried out. They see special education as an important element of the education system. A pilot program has started in special centers of inclusive education in schools or specialized institutions since September 2020.

(<https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja-i-nauka/edukacja-dla-wszystkich--kompleksowa-pomoc-dla-kazdego-dziecka-ucznia-i-jego-rodziny>)

8. Belgium - Ministry of Flemish Education and Training

Specialized education in Belgium is aimed at pupils who experience academic difficulties in ordinary education or who have a (physical or mental, temporary or permanent) disability requiring an adapted environment. This type of teaching observes the needs and learning rate of each pupil through individualized programs. Every type of education is not necessarily organized at all levels of study. Pupils with learning disabilities may in some cases attend regular (partial or full) courses with the support of the special education department.

Children and young people with disabilities are also obliged to attend school. They may participate through the special education system or through normal or mass education, possibly with support. The same compulsory education rules apply in special education as in mass education. Parents or legal representatives of children must comply with the law, i.e. they must register their child at a school and ensure that they attend courses.

There are two types of education: permanent education and continuous education at home.

A child has the right to permanent education at home if: he/she cannot go to school because of a disability; he or she can manage educational guidance. From the age of 5, a child can receive permanent education at home. If the inspectorate decides that permanent education at home is adequate, it will designate a school that will organize the education of the child with special needs. In principle, this is the closest school, taking into account the free choice of parents' school.

(<https://www.belgium.be/fr/formation/enseignement/specialise>,

<https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/ouders/leerplicht/voor-kinderen-met-een-beperking>)

9. France – Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports

Jean-Michel Blanquer, Minister of National Education, Youth and Sports, considers the French school to be a careful school in every of its students and able to welcome everyone. The minister considers that inclusive school is already a reality. The education of all students with disabilities is a priority for its five-year term, and this ambition was strongly reaffirmed by the French president at the national Conference with disabilities on 11 February.

Significant progress has been made since 2017: the French school now receives 65,000 pupils with disabilities. In total, 385,000 pupils are enrolled in this new 2020 school year, more than half of whom receive human assistance.

He considered that due to staff professionalism and involvement, significant progress had been made last year, in an unprecedented context. The road map he established for 2019-2020 with the Minister for Health has achieved its objectives: now every department has a dedicated service for inclusive schools. This new organization, combined with new measures such as the creation of a single free number, has made it possible to manage the health crisis in an efficient and consistent way across the territory, with close support for families and students.

Even if the health crisis (COVID-9) has intervened in the educational process, the minister considers that this period offers the opportunity to further customize the monitoring and support of pupils, based on new tools. In 2021, the ministry will continue its efforts for inclusive schools by EUR 250 million more than in 2020, an increase of 3.3 billion since 2017. Through

this attention for all, the Inclusive School contributes to the two core objectives of the School of Trust: raising overall levels and fighting against inequalities.

As early as 2017, the Government defined the education of children with disabilities as a priority. So, despite the pandemic situation that exists, they want to continue structural changes to best support children with disabilities in education and medical-social systems. They want to change to the common law, continuing the major project to transform the offer and increasingly supporting children with disabilities through the outsourcing of teaching units and the development of virtuous combinations of mobile teams, platforms, support services that will adapt to the needs of pupils in daily school. In this respect, the coverage of almost 80% of the national territory, the scheduling of nearly 190 mobile teams to support schooling, the deployment of teaching units for children with autism - 232 such units receive children at the beginning of the 2020 school year, determine significant changes. They aim to improve cooperation between education staff and health and social actors through ad hoc information and regular exchanges within an identified framework.

The generalization of departmental committees to monitor inclusive school will make services for children with disabilities and their families more efficient. Thus, they consider it important to listen to families and give them the right place. Families are a source of information and knowledge for the pupil.

The Secretary of State of the Prime Minister, in charge of the persons with disabilities, Sophie Cluzel declares: "Together we will succeed in the ambition to make school an inclusive school. By continuing to make school accessible to all, continuing the work done so that every pupil, regardless of his or her disability, can be educated and supported to meet their needs, he or she illustrates the values of the school every day."

(<https://www.education.gouv.fr/ecole-inclusive-comite-national-de-suivi-du-9-novembre-2020-307119>)

10. Romania – Ministry of Education and Research

In Romania the legislative framework is based on international policies and political frameworks supplemented by norms, methodologies and regulations drafted and approved by order of a minister to clarify and implement activities in the field of special education.

The legislative framework for granting children with disabilities the right to education, is currently based on **Law no. 84/1995** which provided for the setting up of expert commissions under the ISJ subordination which are intended to determine the type and degree of the child's disability (art. 43) **on Law 272/2004** on the protection and promotion of children's rights, **but also Law 448/2006** on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and **Law on national education 1/2011**, as subsequently amended and supplemented. According to them, children with disabilities are granted the right to equal opportunities, free education and the existence of special or integrated education is highlighted as a distinct part of the education system.

This law 448/2006 regulates the rights and obligations of persons with disabilities granted for the purpose of their integration and social inclusion (Art.19 (c):

- to ensure access to lifelong learning, adapting it to the educational needs of persons with disabilities;
- pupils with disabilities may have needs related to the adaptation of training techniques (i.e. what the SEN Certificate requires, but also needs for adapting the physical

environment (banks, adapted facilities) and support services that go beyond the training sphere;

- psychological counseling;
- limiting disruptive stimuli in classroom (high-sounds, noise, bullying);
- breathing space (a friendly room of "calming down") if a peak of hyperactivity is reached.

This set of minimum reasonable measures is a type of adaptation that a number of pupils with disabilities need, which goes beyond the scope of the SEN certificate, but still remains in the school's obligations.

By the G.D. no. 1251 / 2005 the gradual movement from segregated schooling to integrated schooling was provided for and in practice it was a form of specially integrated education

Education Law No 1/2011 ensures and guarantees:

- Romanian citizens equal rights of access to all levels and forms of pre-university and higher education, as well as to lifelong learning, without any form of discrimination (Article 2);
- The right to education of all persons with special educational requirements. Special and specially integrated education as part of the national school education system (Article 12);
- To integrate people with learning disorders into mass education (Article 12);

However, the 2011 Education Law does not mention the concept of inclusive education, but only that of social inclusion and special education or integrated education.

According to the legislation in force, in Romania, the schooling of children with disabilities is carried out by the following means: in special schools, in special classes (groups), in mass school units, at the person's home, at the hospital bed.

School orientation of children shall be toward mass or special educational establishments, educational and professional assessment and guidance shall be carried out in terms of the type of deficiency, not the attainment of the individual's maximum potential and the consideration of restrictions on participation. However, depending on the outcome of the assessment and guidance, children/pupils with disabilities may follow a curriculum, depending on the type and degree of disability, the mass school curriculum, the adapted school curriculum, the special school curriculum.

Order No 5574 of 7 October 2011 provides for the approval of the Methodology for organizing educational support services for children, pupils and young people with special educational requirements integrated into mass education.

The order represents inclusive approaches for pupils with SEN that are oriented toward mass education. Article 1 of this order States that "all children/pupils who have been school-oriented toward supporting educational services shall be provided with the psycho-pedagogical support of a visiting and supporting teacher". In fact, a growing number of pupils oriented towards the mass school do not benefit from the psycho-pedagogical support of these teachers, due to the small number of such specialists, which is why the teacher in mass education has no support in the educational process. and pupils do not fully benefit from equal opportunities in education, which is why they can be re-oriented toward special education.

Order No 1985/1305/5805/2016 on the approval of the methodology for the assessment and integrated intervention for the framing of children with disabilities in the degree of

disability, the educational and occupational orientation of children with special educational requirements, as well as for the enabling and rehabilitation of children with disabilities and/or special educational requirements;

This order provides for the setting up of commissions for medical expertise of children with disabilities and of the ISJ expert committees on framing within a degree of disability and educational/professional guidance by CPC through the comprehensive assessment service (Article 21)

Additional educational needs (curriculum adaptation by the visiting and support teacher together with teachers, differentiated teaching strategies through the use of individualized worksheets and assessment sheets, individualized/customized teaching, use of enlarged characters, speech therapy) are identified by a team of specialists, made up of the teacher working directly with the child, the staff of the school evaluation and guidance service, and the medical specialist who gives the diagnosis.

In implementing this methodology, barriers to identifying pupils in need of additional educational support are identified as weak points, as the assessment of these children follows a complex bureaucratic process, but also the reluctance of parents to label them.

In terms of financing, children with SEN are granted a series of material rights and daily food allowances without monitoring by the relevant authorities of these compensatory facilities.

The above-mentioned aspects mean that the situation in Romania regarding access to inclusive education for children with SEN does not fully align with the internationally agreed guidelines. However, the attempt to reform and adapt the education system in Romania is legitimized, given the national context and by closely following the international and European reforms.

Conclusions

The educational integration of pupils with disabilities is a continuous process which, precisely for this reason, cannot be based on practices that are emptied of the educational, cultural and social sense of integration, but on an educational process of growth and support for pupils with disabilities and their caretakers. We must not just look at the formal correctness of bureaucratic requirements, which is often the case, but look at the reality in schools, be they mass schools or special schools. After analyzing the cases mentioned above, but also examples of good practice, we can draw a number of observations on public policies aimed at access to inclusive education.

Educational policy tendencies aim to integrate children with disabilities or special needs into mass education. Depending on the level of development of each country, the involvement of education ministries and organizations that are interested in contributing to the integration of persons with special needs, the degree of implementation of educational policies can be identified. It is known that the government's provision of financial support for the implementation of an inclusive education system is an important factor in its success. This is why the differences between developed and less developed countries lie, as the budget funding allocated to special education is complemented, for low-income countries, by non-governmental organizations; this is why there are often major discrepancies in the quality of the services provided in each country.

Romania is in line with the sustainable development goals of quality education, but at system level, it is difficult to access an inclusive education for many disabled pupils due to lack of funds and human capital. We believe that for the time being the inclusive culture is not formed in the Romanian education system that will determine equal opportunities and we need examples of good practice from other countries that fit our society's requirements.

Following our analysis, both theoretical and practical, we can propose a series of specific measures to support the development of the inclusive education system:

1. Making state-funded services more affordable for people with disabilities through legislative standardization and measures with low level of bureaucracy. France is such an example, which has adopted a single telephone number at the level of significant ministries to which people requesting services to assist disabled people can call.

2. The financing by state medical insurance of services for the recovery and rehabilitation of children with disabilities. This type of funding would ensure easy access to services in particular for people from disadvantaged environments, while at the same time leading to the development of such services also in rural environments, which are currently disadvantaged in this respect. All developed countries offer recovery services through the general health insurance system.

3. The need for specialists in the field is reduced at this moment compared to the real needs of our country, and only one example supporting this statement is the statistics of CMBRAE/CJRAE level regarding the situation of support teachers.

4. Increasing the level of cooperation between mass school and special education professionals in order to facilitate the exchange of information and to deal effectively with problems in inclusive classes, and not only.

5. Enacting support measures to advise families with children with SEN. Although advisory offices exist at DGAS level, they are insufficient and do not cover the needs of the advisory services, neither for children who need such services nor for their families.

6. Enacting differentiated examinations of children with SEN at inclusive schools level as part of national capacity and baccalaureate examinations.

7. Equipping schools with materials and making the environment accessible to children with disabilities. (Oprisan, 2020)

8. Information, popularization among both students and specialists with the legislation and application methodology in the field of special education and social protection.

9. Promoting experiences and good practices in the country and internationally through conferences, exchanges of experience and projects.

10. Development of an extensive network of volunteers in the field of special psychopedagogy and social assistance to support people with disabilities and their families.

11. Involvement of associations and NGOs both in conducting market research and in increasing the quality of services provided to people with disabilities.

12. Encourage entrepreneurship among specialists, especially in rural areas.

Of course, suggestions and recommendations can continue, but it is essential to train a team that works together for the community of persons with disabilities, and this can only be achieved by communication between specialists from various fields, continuous training and maintaining a high standard of services offered.

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