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REPORT

# Promoting **diversity** and **inclusion** in schools in Europe

School  
education

**Erasmus+**  
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European Education  
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# Promoting **diversity** and **inclusion** in schools in Europe



# Foreword



As European citizens, we all share common fundamental values that lie at the core of our everyday lives. Inclusion is one of them. The exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences cultivates cultural intelligence and empathy. A shared understanding that all are deserving, that no one should be left behind, regardless of their backgrounds, origins, beliefs or walks of life.

And inclusion must start, without any doubt, in school.

To create all-encompassing educational environments, schools need to mainstream diversity and inclusion through teaching content, methods and in everyday school life. This also requires attention to individual talents, challenges and needs. Pupils should always feel supported and enabled to reach their full potential. Addressing biases and promoting inclusion from an early age can help to prevent bullying, violence and other discriminatory practices.

The European Commission has launched several initiatives to promote inclusive education environments that embrace diversity and help students feel valued, respected, and included. The importance of inclusion, diversity and well-being in one's learning environment is one of the main pillars of the European Education Area, which the Commission presented in 2020. Ensuring better educational outcomes for all learners, by lifting the performance in basic skills and reducing early leaving from education and training is the aim of the [Council recommendation on pathways to school success](#), adopted in 2022. And in 2023, the European Commission created an expert group to enhance supportive learning environments for vulnerable learners and for promoting well-being and mental health at school.

This Eurydice report provides an overview of the initiatives taken in European education systems in this respect. It investigates what national education authorities across the EU do to address discrimination and to promote diversity and inclusion in schools. It also contains many examples of recent policy initiatives that will hopefully inspire new impulses to make our societies and our education systems more inclusive. I am confident that by working together we can realise our shared vision of establishing unity in diversity in our schools and our societies.

**Margaritis Schinas**

Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life



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## Codes and abbreviations

### Country codes

<b>EU</b> European Union	<b>HR</b> Croatia	<b>European Free Trade Association and candidate countries</b>
<b>Member States</b>	<b>IT</b> Italy	
<b>BE</b> Belgium	<b>CY</b> Cyprus	
<b>BE fr</b> Belgium – French Community	<b>LV</b> Latvia	
<b>BE de</b> Belgium – German-speaking Community	<b>LT</b> Lithuania	
<b>BE nl</b> Belgium – Flemish Community	<b>LU</b> Luxembourg	
<b>BG</b> Bulgaria	<b>HU</b> Hungary	
<b>CZ</b> Czechia	<b>MT</b> Malta	
<b>DK</b> Denmark	<b>NL</b> Netherlands	
<b>DE</b> Germany	<b>AT</b> Austria	
<b>EE</b> Estonia	<b>PL</b> Poland	
<b>IE</b> Ireland	<b>PT</b> Portugal	
<b>EL</b> Greece	<b>RO</b> Romania	
<b>ES</b> Spain	<b>SI</b> Slovenia	
<b>FR</b> France	<b>SK</b> Slovakia	
	<b>FI</b> Finland	
	<b>SE</b> Sweden	
	<b>AL</b> Albania	
	<b>BA</b> Bosnia and Herzegovina	
	<b>CH</b> Switzerland	
	<b>IS</b> Iceland	
	<b>LI</b> Liechtenstein	
	<b>ME</b> Montenegro	
	<b>MK</b> North Macedonia	
	<b>NO</b> Norway	
	<b>RS</b> Serbia	
	<b>TR</b> Türkiye	

### Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>CPD</b>	continuing professional development
<b>EASNIE</b>	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
<b>EEA</b>	European Education Area
<b>ELET</b>	early leaving from education and training
<b>ESF</b>	European Social Fund
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Classification of Education
<b>ITE</b>	initial teacher education
<b>LGBTIQ+</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other sexual identities
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>PISA</b>	programme for international student assessment
<b>SEN</b>	special educational needs
<b>TALIS</b>	Teaching and Learning International Survey

# Main findings

## Overall findings

**All learners need to be considered in policies aiming to promote diversity and inclusion in schools in order to ensure that no one is left behind and that all are supported in their learning and development to achieve their full potential.**

- This report investigates what national/top-level education authorities across Europe do to address discrimination and to promote diversity and inclusion in schools, with a special focus on targeted initiatives to support those learners who are most likely to experience disadvantage and/or discrimination. It shows that students with special educational needs or disabilities are a main target group in all analysed areas – data monitoring, strategic policy frameworks, policies and measures to promote access and participation, national curricula, learning and social-emotional support initiatives, and teacher education and training. Another very frequently targeted student group across most of the thematic areas is migrant and refugee students, followed by ethnic minority students, in particular Roma students. This corresponds to the two most often reported grounds of discrimination in school education, that is, special educational needs/disability and ethnic background.
- Gender equality is also relatively frequently promoted, for example through top-level bodies monitoring cases of discrimination in schools, through cooperation initiatives between education authorities and independent organisations active in the field of diversity and inclusion, or through national curricula. Learners from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, although not explicitly defined as a target group in this report, are also relatively frequently targeted, especially by policies and measures promoting access to and participation in schools and those fostering learning and social-emotional support.
- LGBTIQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other sexual identities) and religious minority students, on the other hand, are much less frequently targeted by policies and measures aiming to promote diversity and inclusion in schools. Even though the different groups of learners analysed in this report face different and varying degrees of challenges and have different needs, it is important that they are all considered in policies aiming to promote diversity and inclusion in order to ensure that no student is left behind and that all are supported in their learning and development to achieve their full potential.
- Throughout the report, many examples of recent policy initiatives are presented, which can inspire national efforts aiming to enhance diversity and inclusion in education. However, the report does not cover the practices implemented in schools. Analysis of the policies' effectiveness or outcomes also falls outside the scope of this report. Therefore, these elements need to be investigated and considered to draw comprehensive conclusions on how to ensure access to quality, inclusive, mainstream education for all learners.
- Below some of the main findings from each chapter of the report are highlighted.

## Findings by chapter

### Chapter 1: Diversity and inclusion in the context of school education

**Addressing discrimination and disadvantage in schools requires a focus on more equitable and inclusive education that considers the specific, multifaceted needs of each learner.**

- The importance of valuing diversity and the inclusion of all learners in education and training is widely recognised in key EU policy documents, including the EU equality strategies linked to the grounds of discrimination listed in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. However, much evidence shows that there are persistent differences in equity of educational access, experience and outcomes when looking at students with different personal and social characteristics, related to their sex, gender, ethnicity, migration background, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, etc.
- People with certain characteristics may face more barriers to accessing resources, such as quality mainstream education, and they may be discriminated against. Discrimination can be structural (e.g. segregation policies or a lack of resources to meet specific needs); it can be compounded by prejudice (both intentional and unintentional), and it can be multifaceted (e.g. bullying of LGBTIQ+ students in schools, which might be compounded if teachers are not adequately trained on how to react).
- It is important to take a holistic intersectional approach when addressing inequity and discrimination. For example, a refugee student may be seen only through that lens, and in school be offered additional support only in learning the language of schooling, and not in other subjects. Inclusive policies and measures thus need to consider the specific, multifaceted needs of each learner.

### Chapter 2: Monitoring discrimination and diversity in schools

**Although most European countries have national bodies for monitoring discrimination and cooperate with different organisations to address it, over half of the education systems report not having access to comprehensive data on the main grounds of discrimination in schools.**

- Data collection and monitoring can be useful mechanisms to draw attention to groups at risk of discrimination and exclusion. Although most European countries report having top-level bodies in charge of monitoring cases of discrimination, including in school education, over half of them indicate not having access to comprehensive data on the main grounds of learners' discrimination in schools. Where these data exist, special educational needs or disabilities and ethnic background are reported as the most common grounds for discrimination.
- Most education authorities report having access to disaggregated data on individual student characteristics, especially sex and/or gender, special educational needs or disability, nationality, country of birth and socioeconomic background. However, fewer than half of the education systems report having access to data on students' refugee/asylum seeker or migration backgrounds and the language spoken at home, and only a minority of them have access to data on learners' ethnic background and religious affiliations.

- Education systems report using disaggregated data mainly as a tool for policy development and/or evaluation, as such evidenced-based information can help education authorities to understand the impact of a certain measure on a specific group of learners, to provide support to learners or to help schools plan appropriate programmes of intervention, using resources where they are needed the most.
- All education systems report that they cooperate with independent bodies and/or organisations, including national equality bodies, to address discrimination in school education. Among the most common fields of cooperation are policy development and support for schools to promote diversity and inclusion, to foster education equality and to prevent discrimination.

### Chapter 3: Top-level legislation, strategies and action plans promoting diversity and inclusion in schools

**Many targeted strategic policy frameworks promote the inclusion of Roma students, students with special educational needs or disabilities, and migrant and/or refugee students, whereas the promotion of gender equality, combating antisemitism and the discrimination of LGBTIQ+ students are less frequently in focus.**

- National/top-level legislation, strategies and action plans can contribute to removing existing barriers to education and to promoting equality and inclusion in schools on a systemic level. All European education systems report the existence of such overarching policy frameworks. Many of them have been introduced in recent years, and they are sometimes based on related EU policy initiatives (e.g. the EU anti-racism action plan or the EU LGBTIQ equality strategy).
- Most education systems report existing policy frameworks that have the global aim to improve the education system (through, inter alia, inclusive education, equal access and learner support), and many report policy frameworks with a focus on preventing discrimination and promoting equal opportunities in education, and on improving students' learning outcomes and/or reducing early leaving from education and training.
- Among the targeted strategic policy frameworks, those most widely reported aim to promote the participation and inclusion of Roma students, closely followed by policy frameworks promoting the inclusion of, and support to, students with special educational needs or disabilities. Policy frameworks targeting other specific student groups, such as migrant and/or refugee students, are still relatively widespread, but strategies focussed on promoting gender equality or combating antisemitism or the discrimination of LGBTIQ+ students are much less frequently reported.
- The success of these policy frameworks depends on adequate resource allocation and the monitoring and evaluation of results.

### Chapter 4: Promoting access to and participation in schools

**Policies on access and participation focus mainly on inclusive education for students with special educational needs or disabilities, or from a migrant, refugee or ethnic minority background, and on financial support for socioeconomically disadvantaged students.**

- Evidence shows that access to and participation in schools is inequitable for some groups. Across Europe, policies and measures to promote the access

and participation of learners who are more likely to face barriers are widely reported. They mostly target learners with special educational needs or disabilities, learners from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and migrant, refugee and ethnic minority students.

- Rates of enrolment in mainstream education of learners with an official decision of special educational needs vary between European countries, and they tend to be low in some cases. Education systems therefore aim to promote the access and participation of students with special educational needs by addressing the way students are assessed and oriented, the schools' human resources and the adaptation of the physical and learning environments.
- Many European education systems also approach barriers to access and participation by providing financial support for school-related costs to compensate for socioeconomic disadvantage. However, the challenge with financial interventions is to ensure sustainable comprehensive support structures that last beyond project-based funding measures.
- More than half of the education systems report policies and measures promoting blended learning approaches, to facilitate the participation of students who are unable to attend school for health reasons, as well as of migrant students and those with learning disabilities. Around half of the education systems also report targeted admission policies giving priority to disadvantaged students and/or removing administrative barriers, such as entrance examinations for newly arrived students.

## Chapter 5: Strengthening diversity and inclusion in school curricula and assessments

**All European education systems promote diversity and inclusion through their curricula, and they aim to make assessments more inclusive, mainly by adapting them to the needs of learners with special educational needs or disabilities and/or by accommodating language barriers for non-native speakers.**

- Although most European education systems report that issues related to diversity and inclusion are already considered in their curricula, nearly half of them report recent curriculum revisions aiming to reinforce these dimensions. They are promoted mainly through the general aims of the curriculum, different subjects (e.g. citizenship education, social sciences, ethics) or cross-curricular areas (e.g. intercultural/multicultural education). Fewer education systems report home-language teaching as a means to support the inclusion of students whose mother tongue is different from the language of schooling.
- Half of the education systems do not specifically target any group of learners when addressing diversity and inclusion in their curricula. Among those that mention specific groups, the groups most commonly referred to are students with special educational needs or disabilities and ethnic minority students, followed by migrant and refugee students, girls/boys, and, to a lesser extent, students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and religious minority students. LGBTIQ+ students are the least mentioned target group.
- In terms of curriculum content, the topic of preventing prejudice and discrimination has been most frequently addressed in recent curriculum revisions; however, addressing human rights, representing diverse identities, combating stereotypes and raising awareness of exclusion, bullying and/or violence have been nearly as frequently considered in recent reforms. Tackling misrepresentation or non-representation of minorities/groups and promoting inclusive language are relatively less frequently reported as topics in existing and recently reformed curricula.

- Promoting diversity and inclusion in school curricula goes hand in hand with adapting assessment systems and practices. The two most common ways in which education authorities try to make assessments more inclusive is by adapting them to the needs of learners with special educational needs or disabilities, mentioned by most education systems, and by accommodating language barriers for non-native speakers, reported by more than half of the education systems.

## Chapter 6: Promoting targeted learning and social-emotional support

**Education systems promote many targeted policies and measures to help schools to identify and meet students' learning and social-emotional needs; at the same time, an intersectional approach is required to address the particular challenges and needs of each learner.**

- Across Europe, the most frequently reported policies and measures aiming to help schools identify students' learning and social-emotional support needs are the ones ensuring the availability of guidance and/or counselling services for evaluating students' learning difficulties, and any behavioural, social-emotional or family issues, etc. Many policy initiatives are also related to procedures for determining students' special educational needs. Less frequently reported are specific guidelines and/or tools for assessing students' learning and social-emotional needs, diagnostic national tests for assessing learning needs and guidelines or tools for assessing language competences.
- Ensuring the availability of a variety of support interventions can help address the multifaceted needs of all learners. Most education systems report policies and measures promoting the provision of learning support in schools, and in particular targeted support interventions for specific groups of at-risk students, such as students with special educational needs or disabilities, refugee migrant and ethnic minority students, as well as those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Policies or measures on social-emotional support are also widely reported; however, they tend to be rather universal (i.e. intended for all students) and less targeted to the needs of specific learners.

## Chapter 7: Teaching staff and teacher training to promote diversity and inclusion

**Education authorities provide many teacher education and training opportunities on diversity and inclusion, and promote the use of educational support staff; however, a reported lack of teacher preparation to manage inclusive classrooms and inadequate funding to employ support staff are challenges that still persist.**

- Evidence shows a lack of diversity within the teacher workforce; nevertheless, only eight European education systems have top-level policies or measures promoting the recruitment of teachers from diverse backgrounds to schools. Where such measures exist, they encourage mainly the recruitment of teachers with disabilities or those from migrant backgrounds.
- The most widely promoted teacher competences, through top-level competence frameworks for initial teacher education and/or top-level continuing professional development (CPD) programmes, are related to teaching students with special educational needs, differentiating and individualising teaching and assessment strategies and understanding the principles of inclusion and non-discrimination. Somewhat less frequently reported are education and training programmes promoting the capacity of

teachers to collaborate with other teachers, professionals and families and to teach in multicultural/multilingual settings and increasing teachers' awareness of bias and stereotypes.

- The rate of teacher participation in some of the aforementioned training programmes can be low. For example, only 20 % of teachers across Europe have participated in CPD on teaching in multicultural or multilingual settings, and many are concerned about their lack of training and preparation in managing an inclusive classroom, indicating a potential need to investigate barriers to participation, and to ensure that teachers have the required competences to promote diversity and inclusion in schools.
- Educational support staff can support the work of teachers and help ensure that all learners achieve their full potential. Most European education systems require or recommend that different specialists (e.g. psychologists, speech therapists, special educational needs specialists, social workers) or teaching assistants should be available in schools and/or they provide financial resources that allow schools to employ support staff. Apart from providing general support to all learners who may need it, educational support staff are mainly intended to provide targeted support to students with special educational needs, those who are not yet fully proficient in the language of schooling (including learners from Ukraine) and Roma students. However, evidence shows that inadequate funding means that schools are sometimes unable to employ the required educational support staff.



## Introduction

The concepts of equality, equity and inclusion have become key topics of the educational science discourse and a policy priority across Europe. There is an increasing diversity within the school landscape, and evidence shows that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who experience discrimination or unequal treatment disproportionately underachieve in schools (European Commission, 2022b).

The notion of diversity relates to differences in people's characteristics, for example their sex, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion and mental and physical abilities (UNESCO, 2017). In the context of education policy, this concept also relates to acceptance and respect, in the sense of 'understanding each other and moving beyond the more limited perspective of tolerance' (European Commission, 2018, p. 14).

Equality is a core value of the EU <sup>(1)</sup>. In a legal sense, it assumes that all people should be treated the same, on the basis of equality of opportunity. In a non-legal context, it is often understood as treating people fairly, which may mean providing equitable opportunities and access, and fair outcomes for different people and protecting people from unlawful discrimination (Loke, 2022). In schools, for example, it may imply different support for students with different learning needs, thus promoting equality of outcome (European Commission, 2023).

This is akin to the concept of equity, which recognises that individuals have different needs, depending on, for example, socioeconomic or other barriers (European Commission, 2018). Equity in education therefore relates to the extent to which learners can fully enjoy the right to education and training, in terms of opportunities, access, treatment and outcomes (European Commission, 2006).

Finally, inclusion is an approach that values diversity and aims to afford equal rights and opportunities to everyone <sup>(2)</sup>. In the area of education, inclusive policies aim to allow all learners to achieve their full potential in mainstream school settings, with special attention and support given to learners at risk of exclusion and underachievement, including through individualised approaches and cooperation with families and local communities (European Commission, 2023).

### EU policy context

At the European level, combating inequalities and discrimination based on 'sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation' is enshrined in EU law, in Articles 8 and 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union <sup>(3)</sup>. Accordingly, the importance of valuing diversity and the inclusion of all learners in education and training is widely recognised in key

<sup>(1)</sup> See Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (OJ C 202,7.6.2016, p.17) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (OJ C 326, 26.1.2012, p. 391).

<sup>(2)</sup> See the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) glossary (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/ecri-glossary>).

<sup>(3)</sup> Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, p. 53).

EU policy documents <sup>(4)</sup>. Improving quality and equity in education is a strategic priority of the European Education Area (EEA) <sup>(5)</sup>, which helps EU Member States work together to build more resilient and inclusive school systems. The EEA's strategic framework <sup>(6)</sup> determines the need to address the diversity of learners and enhance access to quality and inclusive education and training for all, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, as one of the strategic priorities.

A major initiative under the EEA is the Council recommendation on pathways to school success <sup>(7)</sup>, which aims to ensure better educational outcomes for all learners, regardless of background or situation, by improving performance in basic skills and reducing the rate of early leaving from education and training (ELET). Following the EEA's pathways to school success initiative, in 2023 the European Commission created an expert group focused on developing evidence-based policies to support learning environments and well-being in schools and build positive learning environments for all learners.

The need to promote inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for everyone, including learners with difficulties in accessing education and those who require targeted support, has also been established by the Council recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching <sup>(8)</sup> and by the Council recommendation of 29 November 2021 on blended learning approaches <sup>(9)</sup>. The latter invites EU Member States to support the inclusion of all learners in quality education and training by adapting school education systems to be more flexible and by considering a broad range of pedagogical methods, technological tools, learner needs and changing circumstances.

In 2020–2021, the European Commission also adopted a number of EU equality strategies linked to the grounds of discrimination listed in Articles 8 and 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The strategies highlight a series of key actions aimed at challenging structural discrimination and stereotypes, and promoting diversity, equity and inclusion. The equality strategies and inclusion policy frameworks include the 2020–2025 EU gender equality strategy <sup>(10)</sup>, the 2020–2025 EU anti-racism action plan <sup>(11)</sup> and the 2021–2027 action plan on integration and inclusion <sup>(12)</sup>, and also include those focusing on groups at risk of discrimination, such as Roma people <sup>(13)</sup>, LGBTIQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other sexual identities) people <sup>(14)</sup>,

<sup>(4)</sup> For example, the European Pillar of Social Rights, principle 1: everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market ([https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)).

<sup>(5)</sup> See the latest EEA progress report (European Commission and Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2022b), and communication from the Commission (European Commission and Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2022c).

<sup>(6)</sup> Council resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European education area and beyond (2021–2030) (2021/C 66/01).

<sup>(7)</sup> Council recommendation of 28 November 2022 on pathways to school success and replacing the Council recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving (text with EEA relevance) (2022/C 469/01). See also the Commission staff working document accompanying the document proposal for a Council recommendation on pathways to school success (European Commission and Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2022a).

<sup>(8)</sup> Council recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching (2018/C 195/01).

<sup>(9)</sup> Council recommendation of 29 November 2021 on blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education (2021/C 504/03).

<sup>(10)</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>.

<sup>(11)</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A0565%3AFIN>.

<sup>(12)</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0758&from=EN>.

<sup>(13)</sup> See the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0620>).

<sup>(14)</sup> See the 2020–2025 LGBTIQ equality strategy (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0698>).

persons with disabilities <sup>(15)</sup> and Jewish people <sup>(16)</sup>. Strengthening inclusive education is highlighted as a priority dimension in these strategic documents, as ‘education and training is the foundation for successful participation in society and one of the most powerful tools for building more inclusive societies’ <sup>(17)</sup>.

## Content of the report

Against this conceptual and policy background, this report investigates existing national/top-level <sup>(18)</sup> policies and measures that promote diversity and inclusion in school education. It focuses especially on learners who are most likely to experience disadvantage and/or discrimination in schools, including girls/boys, students from different migrant, ethnic and religious backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ students and students with special educational needs or disabilities. Rather than focusing on universal policies and measures that support all students in schools, which exist in many education systems, the report highlights in particular existing targeted policy initiatives promoting the aforementioned learners’ access to quality, inclusive, mainstream education.

The report provides a comparative overview of policies and measures across 39 European education systems. It presents many country examples, which showcase some of the most recent policy developments and provide an overview of current initiatives taken across Europe. However, the report neither discusses the implementation of these policies, nor analyses their effectiveness or outcomes. A presentation of practices at the school level also falls outside the scope of this report.

The report has seven chapters.

**Chapter 1** provides a theoretical and evidence-based outline of some of the main challenges related to diversity and inclusion in schools.

**Chapter 2** presents some mechanisms that allow top-level education authorities to monitor, prevent and address discrimination in school education.

**Chapter 3** outlines the main top-level legislation, strategies or action plans that are currently in place that aim to promote diversity and inclusion in schools.

**Chapter 4** looks at targeted policies and measures to facilitate access to school and participation of learners who are facing barriers.

**Chapter 5** investigates whether and how diversity and inclusion are considered in school curricula and how assessment methods are adapted to the needs of learners.

**Chapter 6** examines top-level guidelines, policies and measures that help schools to provide learners with targeted learning and social-emotional support.

**Chapter 7** explores some of the top-level policies and measures relating to teaching staff and teacher education and training to foster diversity and inclusion in schools.

The annex includes country-specific presentations of the data covered in the report.

<sup>(15)</sup> See the 2021–2030 strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2021%3A101%3AFIN>).

<sup>(16)</sup> See the 2021–2030 EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0615&from=EN>).

<sup>(17)</sup> See the 2021–2027 action plan on integration and inclusion (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0758&from=EN>), p. 8.

<sup>(18)</sup> The terms ‘national’ and ‘top level’ refer to the highest level of authority in a given country, usually at the national (state) level (see the glossary for a full definition). Throughout the report, the term ‘top level’ is mainly used, to facilitate reading.

## Data sources and methodology

The main source of information is the Eurydice Network data collection on top-level education policies and measures. In some cases, relevant initiatives from other policy areas are also presented. The report covers all 39 education systems that are part of the Eurydice Network (EU-27 Member States, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye) <sup>(19)</sup>.

Data are collected using a dedicated survey. The Eurydice indicators provide information derived primarily from top-level regulations, recommendations or other official education documents such as curricula and similar steering documents and guidelines. In some cases, decentralised systems, whereby responsibility for education lies at the regional or local level, present regional regulations or examples of local approaches.

The data focus on primary and general secondary education (International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 1, 24 and 34) in public schools (except for Belgium, Ireland and the Netherlands, where government-dependent private schools are taken into account). As the differences in policies between education levels are minimal, most figures in the report do not make a distinction, but rather show the general situation across the whole span of school education. The reference year for all the data in the report is the school year 2022/2023.

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<sup>(19)</sup> The data related to the Flemish Community of Belgium has not been validated by the Eurydice National Unit.

# Chapter 1: Diversity and inclusion in the context of school education

Education is the cornerstone of good life chances, especially in a world moving from the fourth to the fifth industrial revolution <sup>(20)</sup>. This has become even more apparent since the COVID-19 pandemic, as more complex digital and technological skills were, and remain, in demand, and new capabilities continue to develop. Yet access to good education and skills development is divergent and inequitable across Europe. There are differences in equity of educational access, experience and outcomes when looking at different social categories (e.g. related to sex/gender, ethnicity, migration background, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation) and factors such as urban/rural divides and access to digital infrastructure.

## 1.1. Gaps between groups of students

The EU's 2022 Education and training monitor highlights some of the stark gaps between groups of students. For example, those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds are much more likely than those from more advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds to experience severe educational underperformance <sup>(21)</sup>. The average gap is 19.3 percentage points across the EU, 'with students of low socioeconomic status 5.6 times more likely to underachieve in school education than students of high socioeconomic status' (European Commission, 2022b, p. 9).

Girls are less likely to underachieve than boys (the proportion who do is about 3 percentage points lower) and also less likely to leave education and training early (3.5 percentage points lower) (European Commission, 2022b). However, the same report notes that education and training systems tend to continue to engrain outdated gender stereotypes and that gender gaps in subject choice persist and can be significant.

The migration background of young people also affects their educational journeys, and migrant young people are 12.9 percentage points more likely than the EU average to leave school early,

and 7.1 percentage points less likely to obtain a tertiary education qualification (European Commission, 2022b). There are also persistent and significant gaps between migrant students (both first and second generation) and their native peers (Volante et al., 2019) in the results of the programme for international student assessment (PISA). This can be due to language, lower teacher expectation or segregation (in both schools and wider society), but perhaps also a wider link between migration status and socioeconomic status. This affects students from migrant backgrounds throughout their lives, resulting in poorer education outcomes, fewer work opportunities and a continued cycle of socioeconomic disadvantage (Volante et al., 2019).

A focus on more equitable and inclusive education is therefore required if Europe is to achieve the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights: 'everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education' <sup>(22)</sup>.

## 1.2. Discrimination and disadvantage

Inequity is the result of disadvantage and/or discrimination due to any number of personal and social characteristics, such as sex, gender, ethnicity, migration background, religion, disability status, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation. People in these social categories are disadvantaged not per se, but because structures are in place that often deny access to resources (such as quality mainstream education or appropriate services) or create barriers to accessing such resources. Structures are the ways in which societies are organised, and these give rise to relative advantage or disadvantage due to the complex interconnectedness of social categories and power. Education inequity can therefore manifest itself in unequal distribution of resources such as funding, qualified teachers, technology and learning material, which is often linked to the fact that disadvantaged groups are disproportionately located in settings with limited resources, for example in rural areas or in communities segregated by ethnicity, socioeconomic status or religion (Nurse and Melhuish, 2021).

<sup>(20)</sup> See [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/industry-50\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/industry-50_en).

<sup>(21)</sup> Defined as low scores on all three PISA scales simultaneously (reading, maths and science), by socioeconomic status.

<sup>(22)</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en).

Evidence from the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights shows that access to and participation in schools is inequitable for some groups, such as refugee and migrant children and young people, who are more likely to be segregated in schools with fewer resources, and, in some cases, over-represented in special education (Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, 2017). The same report found that Roma children and some migrant and refugee children can be affected by enrolment denials or repeated housing evictions, which complicates access to and participation in mainstream education. Similarly, children and young people with disabilities, especially those with severe disabilities, are often denied access to education (Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, 2017).

Disadvantaged groups of people are also often discriminated against. The concept of discrimination in education is, in other words, treating students from certain groups less favourably than students not from those groups. Discrimination is one of the potential causes of inequity, and it can take many different forms in schools: it can be structural, such as policies or practices that segregate Roma children and young people into special schools and classes<sup>(23)</sup>; segregation of students with disabilities or a lack of resources to meet specific needs; or the lack of connectivity and equipment in rural areas (Rundel and Saleminck, 2021), leading to an inequitable urban-rural educational divide.

Discrimination can, moreover, be compounded by prejudice (whether intentional or unintentional), such as occurs, for example, when teachers with biases treat students of certain ethnicities or religions unfairly. And it can be multifaceted, for example the bullying of LGBTIQ+ students in schools by other students, which might be compounded if teachers are reluctant, or feel unable, to intervene (Gasinska, 2015).

Multifaceted discrimination is also highly evident in the treatment of persons with disabilities: teachers may lack the knowledge and skills to support these students<sup>(24)</sup>, or schools may not have enough resources to meet specific needs. At the EU level, the proportion of students leaving school early is 9.5 percentage points higher for students with disabilities than for those without a disability<sup>(25)</sup>. It should also be noted that academic performance as measured by PISA scores can be considered exclusionary for persons with disabilities because the sampling of students to sit the PISA test allows the exclusion of special schools or students with disabilities within schools<sup>(26)</sup>.

<sup>(23)</sup> Council recommendation of 12 March 2021 on Roma equality, inclusion and participation (OJ C 93, 19.3.2021, p. 1).

<sup>(24)</sup> See, for example, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/12/04/sink-or-swim/barriers-children-disabilities-european-school-system>.

<sup>(25)</sup> See <https://www.edf-feph.org/education-policy>.

<sup>(26)</sup> See <https://enil.eu/how-inclusive-is-pisa>.

In relation to LGBTIQ+ students, data from a 2021 survey show that, in Europe, 54 % of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex young people surveyed had experienced bullying in school and 83 % had witnessed some type of negative remarks addressed to someone else based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or variations of sex characteristics (IGLYO, 2021). The same report also highlights that teachers in Europe are not adequately trained in how to deal with violence against LGBTIQ+ students and tend not to mediate even if they witness an incident. Overall, only one in three LGBTIQ+ young people consider that they have received systemic support or protection during their school time over the previous decade (IGLYO, 2021). If curricula are based on a state religion and do not allow for discussion of individual rights and diversity of lifestyles, this can exacerbate tension and treatment of LGBTIQ+ students (Gorard, 2020).

### 1.3. Intersectionality

It is important not to take a reductionist approach when addressing inequity and discrimination in education, and instead take a holistic intersectional approach, where possible. Intersectionality as a concept is widely considered to have been developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to explore the oppression faced by African American women. Intersectionality is present when two or more grounds operate simultaneously and interact in an inseparable manner, producing distinct and specific forms of discrimination<sup>(27)</sup>.

Intersectionality may manifest itself in different ways in education. For example, Roma people are often cited as the most disadvantaged and discriminated-against group across Europe. Roma people are, however, not homogeneous. Comparing the situation of Roma men with that of Roma women across EU Member States, the situation of Roma women is worse in key areas of life such as education, employment and health. In educational attainment, Roma women are less likely than Roma men to have attended school, or to stay in school after age 16; they are also less likely to be able to read and write (FRA, 2014). This could be partly explained by the culturally ascribed role of Roma women (Forray and Óhidy, 2019), but is reinforced by prejudice, stereotypes and, sometimes, segregated education, especially in rural areas (Musilová, 2021).

Viewing people through a single lens has important practical implications. For example, a refugee student may be seen only through that lens, and in school be offered additional support only in learning the language of schooling. If native-born peers but not

<sup>(27)</sup> See <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/intersectionality-and-multiple-discrimination>.

refugee students are given support in other subjects, this may be because an intersectional lens has not been applied (Bešić et al., 2020). Support systems in schools are often structured separately, pushing certain needs aside (Waitoller and Kozleski, 2013), and thus can be one-dimensional. Therefore, what is required for truly inclusive education is to consider the specific, multifaceted needs of each learner.

## 1.4. Moving forward

As a starting point to understanding individual needs, at a macro level, data collection and monitoring (addressed in Chapter 2 of this report) are required in order to evaluate what resources might be needed in different regions/schools, the challenges that students from different backgrounds might face and the types of support they may need. This can allow for focused resource allocation and policy development; it can also allow national authorities to broadly understand the diversity of students in their education systems, and if there are inequitable experiences and outcomes.

At the EU level, there are a range of strategic frameworks to address discrimination and inequity related to gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious background, etc. (see the EU policy context presented in the Introduction). These, together with international treaties such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities <sup>(28)</sup>, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child <sup>(29)</sup> and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women <sup>(30)</sup>, have been ratified by EU Member States and associated states and provide a strategic basis for national education frameworks to address inclusion and discrimination (addressed in Chapter 3 of this report). The success of these frameworks, however, is contingent on adequate and appropriate resource allocation, which also requires monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, as noted above.

To move towards inclusive education policy and practice requires further structural changes. It may require a reassessment, for example, of segregated schooling or of policies around school choices and selective schools (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020), and addressing differential school resources and financial and other forms of assistance to promote access and participation of disadvantaged student groups to quality mainstream education (addressed in Chapter 4 of this report).

At the level of schools, a key starting point for promoting principles of inclusion and equity is addressing the curriculum. This includes what is taught and learnt, together with their coherence with pedagogical methods and materials to support learning (OECD, 2023). Inclusive curricula also require coherence between national-level curricula documents and pedagogical approaches and assessment methods (addressed in Chapter 5 of this report). This goes beyond ‘what’ is being taught to ‘how’ it is being taught and ‘how’ learning is assessed. The way classrooms are managed, and whether some students are given more airtime when speaking or encouraged to participate more, whether discriminatory views are challenged or whether there are different assessment methods to demonstrate learning, affects educational outcomes. Providing targeted learning support for different groups and social-emotional support may also help to build a stronger sense of belonging and inclusion in education and in wider society (addressed in Chapter 6 of this report).

The delivery of inclusive curricula is, last but not least, dependent on having diverse educators and school staff, who require the necessary training and development. This is also true in terms of creating a school environment that is inclusive and challenges inequity. Initial teacher education (ITE) and CPD on understanding the changing nature of diversity, on how to address issues of discrimination and disadvantage and on challenging the assumptions and attitudes of staff (addressed in Chapter 7 of this report) are important factors in creating educational environments that promote a stronger sense of belonging and inclusion among students.

Schooling in times of the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that education can be delivered in different ways and that pedagogical approaches and methods could pivot quickly to meet new challenges. This reminds us that we can evolve and adapt quickly. However, another impact of the pandemic has been an increase in learning inequalities in Europe, with some groups less able than others to access digital learning and resources (European Commission et al., 2022; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2022b) and, overall, a generation of students who have experienced learning loss (Blaskó et al., 2022). It is therefore ever more important that there is a strong focus on addressing equity and promoting diversity and inclusion in education in order to better the life chances of young people today. Of course, what works in one country may not work in another, but we can continue to learn from each other’s experiences across Europe and develop inclusive education in our different contexts.

<sup>(28)</sup> See <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-crpd>.

<sup>(29)</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>.

<sup>(30)</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>.

## Chapter 2: Monitoring discrimination and diversity in schools

Monitoring systems, such as dedicated bodies and data collections, can be useful mechanisms to draw attention to groups at risk of discrimination and exclusion. In the context of education, effective monitoring can provide a picture of the discrimination experienced by students in schools and help to identify measures that countries may adopt to address it. Indeed, effective monitoring can contribute to establishing priorities for policy development and implementation.

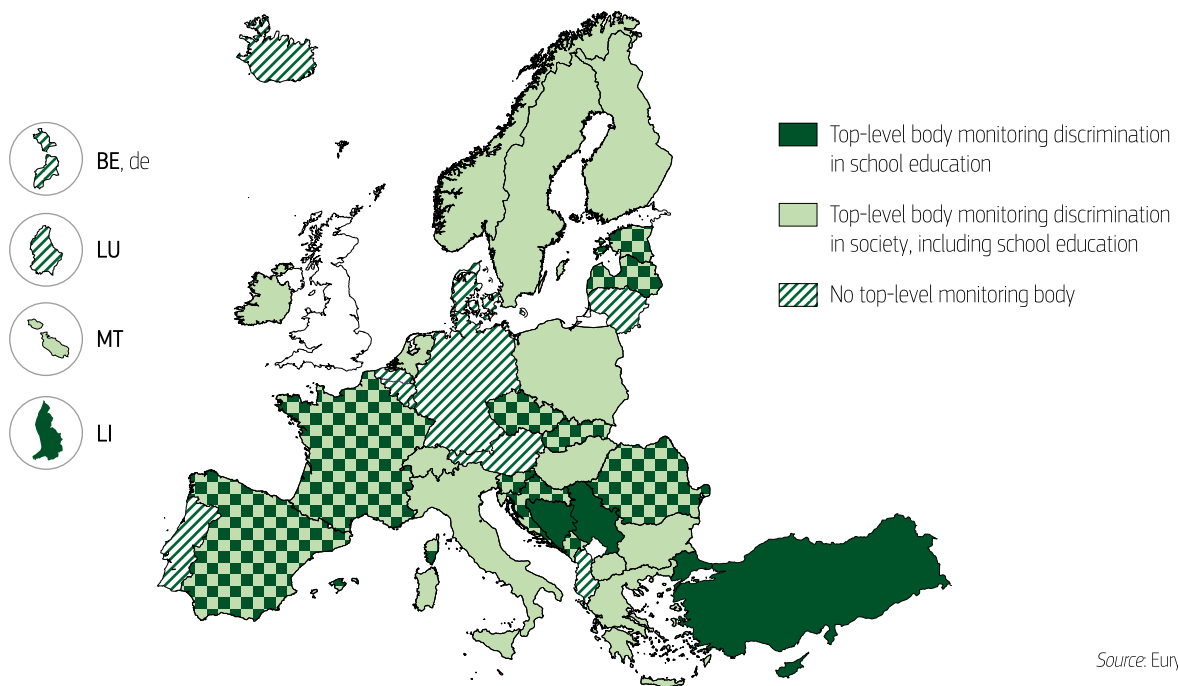
This chapter analyses some of the mechanisms that are in place across European education systems to monitor and tackle discrimination in school education. It provides an overview of the bodies or institutions in charge of monitoring cases of discrimination in schools, the most frequently reported grounds of discrimination and the availability of data on individual student characteristics and how they are used in the

context of addressing discrimination in schools. Finally, the chapter provides information on the cooperation between education authorities and different national bodies and organisations aiming to prevent discrimination and to promote diversity and inclusion in schools.

### 2.1. Top-level bodies monitoring cases of discrimination in schools

Across Europe, most of the education systems report having top-level bodies in charge of monitoring discrimination in school education (Figure 2.1). These bodies either focus on discrimination in society at large, including in schools, or focus specifically on discrimination in school education.

**Figure 2.1: Top-level bodies monitoring cases of discrimination in school education, 2022/2023**



In general, the role of the **top-level bodies that focus on society at large** is to monitor cases of discrimination, to identify possible ways to prevent it, to promote equal opportunities for everyone and to provide concrete assistance to victims (e.g. the

National Office against Racial Discrimination<sup>(31)</sup> in Italy and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination<sup>(32)</sup> in Bulgaria). In Finland, the

<sup>(31)</sup> See <https://unrar.it/portale>.

<sup>(32)</sup> See <https://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com/layout>.



Non-Discrimination Ombudsman<sup>(33)</sup> and the Ombudsman for Equality<sup>(34)</sup> focus on both preventing discrimination and promoting equity in all sectors of society, including education and schools. In Croatia, the Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia<sup>(35)</sup> works for the promotion and protection of human rights and freedom, while the Gender Equality Ombudsperson<sup>(36)</sup> and the Ombudswoman for Persons with Disabilities<sup>(37)</sup> monitor and promote, gender equality and the rights and interests of persons with disabilities, respectively.

In Spain, there are several national bodies focusing on cases of discrimination in society; for example, the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE) is a platform offering information and analysis to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, and hate incidents and crimes<sup>(38)</sup>, while the Pluralism and Coexistence Foundation<sup>(39)</sup> and the Women's Institute<sup>(40)</sup> monitor issues related to religious freedom and the situation of women in the country, respectively.

#### The top-level monitoring body focusing specifically on discrimination cases in schools

is usually the ministry of education (e.g. in Estonia, Romania, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia) and its departments, for example the Education Inspectorate in Slovenia<sup>(41)</sup>. In Czechia, the Czech School Inspectorate<sup>(42)</sup> is the body in charge of systematically evaluating and monitoring the conditions, processes and outcomes of education and educational services, including issues related to equity, discrimination and disadvantage.

The bodies charged with monitoring discrimination in the school environment mostly conduct internal surveys to get an overview of discrimination incidents experienced by different groups of learners, gather information in order to improve the school climate and propose measures that favour school coexistence (e.g. the State Observatory for School Coexistence in Spain; see the country example below), or they collect statistical data on behavioural problems including discrimination cases (e.g. the Division for School Social Work in Liechtenstein<sup>(43)</sup>).

In **Spain** there are several top-level bodies tackling cases of discrimination in education. For example, the State Observatory for School Coexistence<sup>(44)</sup>, a collegiate body of the General State Administration, is responsible for collecting information to improve the school climate, analysing the situations and proposing measures to improve coexistence in schools.

The Forum for the Educational Inclusion of Students with Disabilities<sup>(45)</sup> is a space for meeting, debate, proposal, promotion and monitoring of policies for the inclusion of students with disabilities within the whole Spanish educational system. The forum issues reports, proposals and recommendations on the work carried out and on the situation of students with disabilities in Spain.

The violence prevention and promotion plan of coexistence<sup>(46)</sup> of the autonomous community of Valencia is an instrument to analyse and evaluate coexistence problems in Valencian schools, through which it is possible to plan and coordinate interventions to prevent and solve possible conflicts.

Some of the **education systems without top-level monitoring bodies** report that monitoring of discrimination cases is carried out at other administration levels. In Poland, for example, the investigation of complaints about the activities of educational institutions is the responsibility of the school inspectors, who act on behalf of the Regional Educational Authority, as part of their pedagogical supervision. Complaints about the activities of an educational institution related to the lack of respect for human or civil rights can also be reported to the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights<sup>(47)</sup>. In the French Community of Belgium, cases of discrimination are monitored at the local level and reported to the education administration of the French Community or to the responsible federal body<sup>(48)</sup>. Finally, in Germany, although there is no top-level body monitoring discrimination in schools, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency<sup>(49)</sup> provides guidance on how to prevent discrimination incidents and promote diversity and inclusion of different groups of learners.

<sup>(33)</sup> See <https://syrijinta.fi/en/front-page>.

<sup>(34)</sup> See <https://tasa-arvo.fi/en/front-page>.

<sup>(35)</sup> See <https://www.ombudsman.hr/en>.

<sup>(36)</sup> See <https://www.prs.hr/cms>.

<sup>(37)</sup> See <https://posi.hr/?lang=en>.

<sup>(38)</sup> See <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/index.htm>.

<sup>(39)</sup> See <https://www.pluralismoyconvivencia.es>.

<sup>(40)</sup> See <https://www.inmujeres.gob.es>.

<sup>(41)</sup> See <https://www.gov.si/en/state-authorities/bodies-within-ministries/education-inspectorate>.

<sup>(42)</sup> See <https://www.csicr.cz/cz>.

<sup>(43)</sup> See [https://www.llv.li/serviceportal2/amtstellen/stabstelle-regierungskanzlei/ii\\_2\\_aeusseres\\_bildung\\_und\\_sport\\_web.pdf](https://www.llv.li/serviceportal2/amtstellen/stabstelle-regierungskanzlei/ii_2_aeusseres_bildung_und_sport_web.pdf).

<sup>(44)</sup> See <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/mc/sgctie/convivencia-escolar/observatorio.html>.

<sup>(45)</sup> See <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=B0E-A-2010-17707>.

<sup>(46)</sup> See <https://ceice.gva.es/es/web/inclusioeducativa/previ-pla-de-prevencio-de-la-violencia-i-de-promocio-de-la-convivencia>.

<sup>(47)</sup> See <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/en>.

<sup>(48)</sup> See <http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=27715#plainte>.

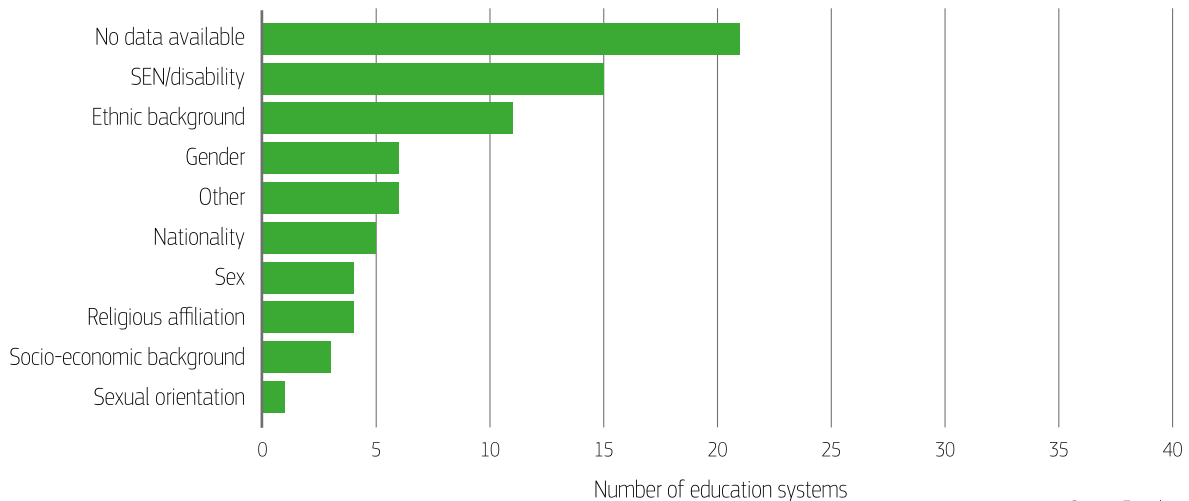
<sup>(49)</sup> See [https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/Leitfaeden/leitfaden\\_diskriminierung\\_an\\_schulen\\_erkennen\\_u\\_vermeiden.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=4](https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/Leitfaeden/leitfaden_diskriminierung_an_schulen_erkennen_u_vermeiden.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4).

## 2.2. Grounds of discrimination in schools

In order to understand occurrences of discrimination and be able to develop policies and actions to promote diversity and inclusion in the school environment,

it is important to identify the grounds leading to discrimination (see also the grounds covered by EU law in the Introduction). Figure 2.2 provides an overview of the main grounds based on which learners in schools are discriminated against, as reported by European education systems, based on official data, reports, etc.

**Figure 2.2: Main grounds on which discrimination cases in schools are based, 2022/2023**



Source: Eurydice

### Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting the most common grounds for discrimination in schools (in descending order). A country-specific overview can be found in the Annex (Table 2.2A).

Firstly, it can be noted that over half of the European education systems report that they do not have access to comprehensive data on the grounds of discrimination at school. One reason for this can be that recognised cases of discrimination are only the ‘tip of the iceberg’ – due to under-reporting or to instances when it is very difficult to prove that discrimination has taken place. Sweden, for example, stated that many cases of discrimination do not come to the attention of the Equality Ombudsman, an independent government agency collaborating with the education authority to promote equal rights for everyone, and, when these cases are reported, they do not always constitute discrimination in the legal sense <sup>(50)</sup>.

Most of the education systems with available official data reported **special educational needs or disability** and **ethnic background** to be the most common grounds leading to discrimination cases, followed by **gender, nationality, sex, religious affiliation, socioeconomic background** and **sexual orientation**. Other grounds of discrimination are the lack of knowledge of the language of schooling, skin

colour and other distinctive cultural features (e.g. in Luxembourg). Some education systems, such as the one in Latvia, reported cases of discrimination experienced by Ukrainian refugee learners in schools. Türkiye mentioned political orientation as a cause that can lead learners to experience discrimination.

Although some education systems do not have official data, they have some information on the grounds based on which students experience discrimination in schools. For example, Finland states that, although there are no official data, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman highlights the following grounds for discrimination in schools: age, gender, origin, nationality, language, religious belief, political opinion or activity, family relationships, health, disability and sexual orientation.

Similarly, Czechia affirmed that the School Inspectorate does not regularly publish the reasons why learners are discriminated against. However, the thematic survey ‘Assessment of risky behaviour of primary and secondary school pupils with a focus on cyberbullying’, conducted in 2022/2023 <sup>(51)</sup>, showed that the most frequent reasons for bullying at basic schools (ISCED 1 + 2) were as follows: personal characteristics (72 %), other physical differences (30 %), social disadvantage (30 %),

<sup>(50)</sup> See <https://equineteurope.org/eb/cp-slug-167>.

<sup>(51)</sup> See <https://www.csicr.cz/cz/Dokumenty/Tematicke-zpravy/Tematicka-zprava-%E2%80%93-Hodnoceni-rizikoveho-chovani-za>.

being a newly arrived student (7 %), disability (4 %), nationality/ethnicity (7 %), homophobia or transphobia (3 %), gender (2 %) and other reasons (15 %). Similar results were found in upper secondary schools.

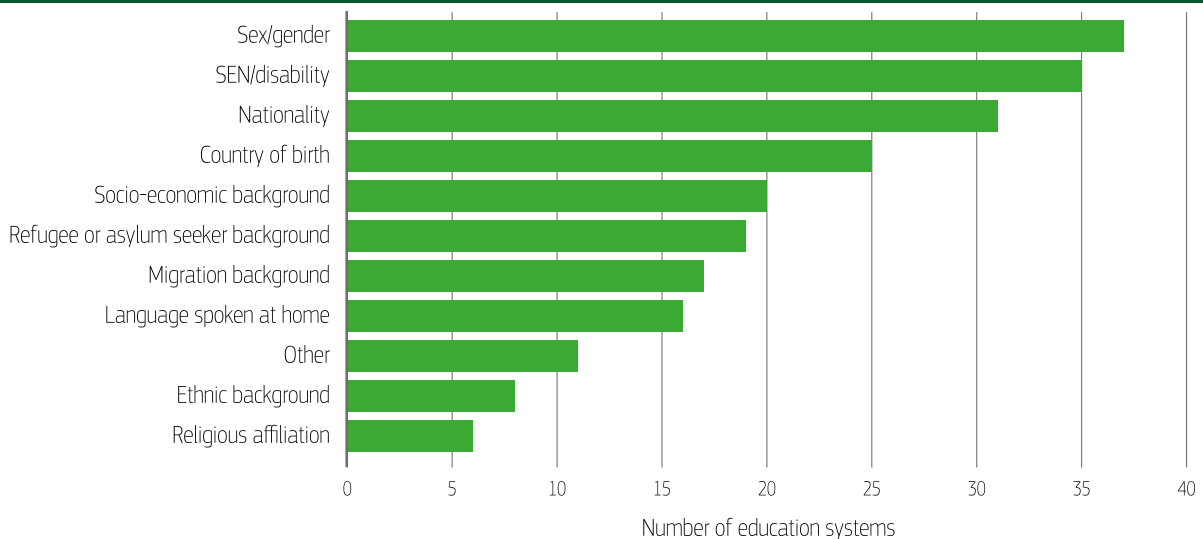
### 2.3. Collection of disaggregated student data

The collection of disaggregated personal data is often perceived as a sensitive matter by many European countries. For this reason, constitutional norms, the applicable EU data protection laws and the Charter of Fundamental Rights protect sensitive personal data, and the EU anti-discrimination legislation prohibits the use of such data to the disadvantage of the groups they refer to. However, as affirmed by the European Commission's High-Level Group on Non-discrimination, Equality and Diversity, 'if collected and

processed in full respect of this legal framework and the safeguards it sets out, such data are essential for Member States to assess their compliance with human rights obligations and enables policy makers to design evidence-based measures to address discrimination, inequalities and exclusion' (2018, p. 6).

In the area of school education, disaggregated student data can be used by education authorities to monitor the diversity of their student populations, identify students who are disadvantaged and/or at risk of being discriminated and understand barriers to inclusion (UNESCO, 2021a). These data also allow governments to develop evidenced-based policies and monitor their implementation. Figure 2.3 provides an overview of the data on individual student characteristics that top-level education authorities across Europe report having access to.

**Figure 2.3: Data on individual student characteristics accessible to top-level education authorities, 2022/2023**



#### Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting on the data on individual student characteristics that are accessible to them (in descending order).

A country-specific overview can be found in the annex (Table 2.3A).

In most education systems, disaggregated data are collected at national/top level for statistical purposes. More than half of them report having access to data concerning the **sex or gender** of students, the presence of students with **special educational needs or disabilities**, students' **nationality**, **country of birth** and **socioeconomic background**. Fewer than half of the education systems report having access to data on the **refugee**, **asylum seeker** or **migration background** of students and the **language spoken at**

**home** by students. Very few education systems report having access to data on learners' **ethnic background**, and only six education systems – the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Ireland, Cyprus, Romania, Liechtenstein and Türkiye – report having access to data on students' **religious affiliation**.

In addition to this, some education systems report having access to other data, such as the age of students (e.g. in Czechia and Sweden), their academic performance and language of schooling (e.g. in Spain), the educational support students receive (e.g. in Spain and Latvia) and whether students live in rural or urban areas, or in overseas departments (e.g. in France).

Some education systems have a national database gathering data on the total number of students and their characteristics. The Estonian education

information system <sup>(52)</sup>, for example, is a web-based national register that compiles data concerning the education system, including the students. In Italy, the National Register of Students is an online service accessible to the Ministry of Education, schools and other authorised subjects, which gathers data on students' characteristics, including their age and academic performance <sup>(53)</sup>. In Iceland, Statistics Iceland <sup>(54)</sup> collects, processes and disseminates education data, including student information, by means of a questionnaire from school heads.

Disaggregated data are used in the majority of education systems as a tool for policy development and/or evaluation as they provide evidenced-based information, which can help to understand the impact of a certain measure on a specific group of learners. Education systems report that disaggregated data are especially needed to assess measures aimed at supporting inclusive education. In Portugal <sup>(55)</sup>, for example, data on the number of children with special educational needs are used to evaluate the efficacy of specialised support measures or the need to strengthen them.

Disaggregated data are also used to provide support to learners or to help schools to detect and analyse problems and needs more accurately, and to plan appropriate programmes of intervention, using resources where they are needed the most. For instance, some education systems report that they allocate resources to schools according to the number of children with special educational needs. This is the case, for example, in Greece, Croatia, Italy and Slovenia, where schools can reduce class sizes and have a counsellor to coordinate the activities, or a support teacher (see also Chapter 4, Section 4.1).

Education authorities also set up specific programmes on the basis of the number of students who do not speak the language of schooling (e.g. in the context of DASPA (*Dispositif d'Accueil et de Scolarisation des élèves PrimoArrivants et Assimilés*) and FLA (*Français langue d'apprentissage*) <sup>(56)</sup> in the French Community of Belgium, the decree on the schooling of newly arrived students in the German-speaking Community of Belgium <sup>(57)</sup> and the actions of the ministry to support the Ukrainian educational community in Greece <sup>(58)</sup>). Ireland uses disaggregated data to provide additional support, including additional resources, to

schools with learners from the Traveller community <sup>(59)</sup>.

Finally, some education systems report using disaggregated student data to conduct research and evaluation on equity policies and equity funding (e.g. in the Flemish Community of Belgium <sup>(60)</sup>) or to conduct research in the field of education (e.g. in Germany <sup>(61)</sup>).

## 2.4. Cooperation with equality bodies and other independent organisations

Education authorities often cooperate with different bodies or organisations in an effort to prevent discrimination and promote diversity and inclusion in schools. According to the data analysed for this report, all participating education systems report ongoing collaborations with equality bodies and/or other independent organisations active in the field of diversity and inclusion.

Education authorities work in particular with the national equality bodies that are part of the European Network of Equality Bodies <sup>(62)</sup>. These bodies are public organisations mainly involved in assisting victims of discrimination, monitoring and reporting on discrimination issues, and contributing to an awareness of rights and a society valuing equality. They are legally required to do so in relation to one, some or all of the grounds of discrimination covered by EU law – sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. They play a fundamental role in the non-discrimination architecture of the EU. Figure 2.4 presents the main areas of cooperation between the top-level education authorities and the national equality bodies.

<sup>(52)</sup> See <https://www.ehis.ee>.

<sup>(53)</sup> See <https://www.istruzione.it/accesso-sidi>.

<sup>(54)</sup> See <https://www.statice.is/statistics/society/education>.

<sup>(55)</sup> See [https://www.dgeec.mec.pt/np4/%7B\\$clientServletPath%7D/?newsId=1363&fileName=EI2021\\_Publicacao\\_PublicoME.xlsx](https://www.dgeec.mec.pt/np4/%7B$clientServletPath%7D/?newsId=1363&fileName=EI2021_Publicacao_PublicoME.xlsx).

<sup>(56)</sup> See [https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/46275\\_005.pdf](https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/46275_005.pdf).

<sup>(57)</sup> See [https://ostbelgienbildung.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-2231/4271\\_read-51040](https://ostbelgienbildung.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-2231/4271_read-51040).

<sup>(58)</sup> See <https://www.minedu.gov.gr/oukraniki-ekpaideftiki-koinotita>.

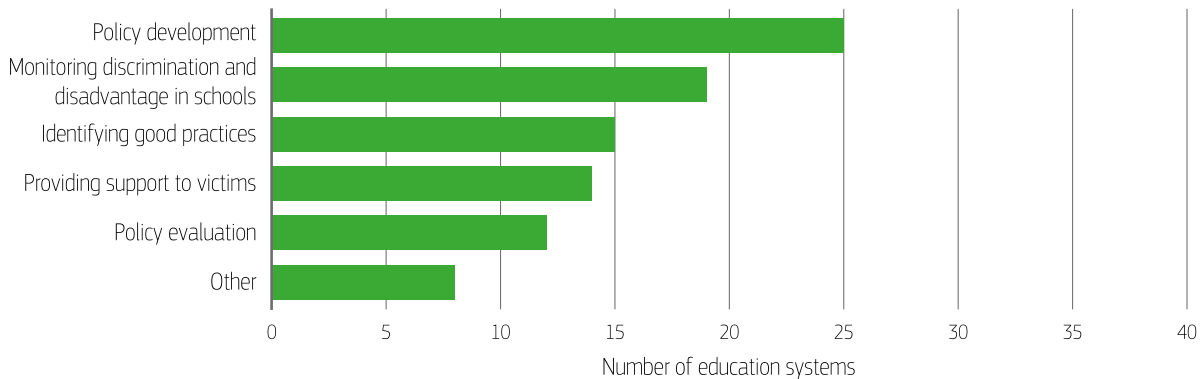
<sup>(59)</sup> See <https://www.gov.ie/pdf?file=https://assets.gov.ie/220043/d6b98002-a904-427f-b48a-0fa0af756ea7.pdf#page=null>.

<sup>(60)</sup> See [https://dataloep-publiek.vlaanderen.be/QvAJAXZfc/notoolbar.htm?document=LP-Publiek%2FPubliek\\_Leerlingenkenmerken.qvw&host=PubliekQVS%40cww100163&anonymous=true](https://dataloep-publiek.vlaanderen.be/QvAJAXZfc/notoolbar.htm?document=LP-Publiek%2FPubliek_Leerlingenkenmerken.qvw&host=PubliekQVS%40cww100163&anonymous=true).

<sup>(61)</sup> See <https://www.kmk.org/dokumentation-statistik/statistik/schulstatistik.html>.

<sup>(62)</sup> See <https://www.equineteurope.org>.

**Figure 2.4: Main fields of cooperation between top-level education authorities and equality bodies, 2022/2023**



Source: Eurydice

### Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting cooperation between top-level education authorities and national equality bodies in the listed areas (in descending order). A country-specific overview can be found in the annex (Table 2.4A).

Overall, the data show that the main field of cooperation between top-level education authorities and national equality bodies is **policy development**. Equality bodies are, indeed, often consulted by the ministry of education of a country when it is drafting new laws supporting the inclusion of children in schools. In Poland, for example, the recommendations of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights<sup>(63)</sup> were used by the Ministry of Education and Science for the development of the 2022–2030 national action programme for equal treatment<sup>(64)</sup>, aimed at supporting an inclusive education system, developing positive relations in the school environment and assisting schools and teachers working with students with special educational needs. Similarly, in Slovakia, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport cooperated with the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights<sup>(65)</sup> during negotiations related to the amendment of the education acts<sup>(66)</sup>. In Latvia, the Ministry of Education and Science also regularly considers the recommendations of the equality body, the Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia<sup>(67)</sup>, in the development of regulations and rules.

In **Lithuania**, there is close cooperation between education authorities and the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson on matters concerning policy development and raising awareness of discrimination issues. The Lithuanian equality body is mainly consulted by education policymakers in building strategies and tools for the integration and respect of human rights in education, and in developing teacher training programmes<sup>(68)</sup>.

In May 2021, the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson provided the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport with conclusions 'On the evaluation of the General Programme for the Development of Life Skills'. The service recommended supplementing the programme with the following topics: critical evaluation of gender stereotypes, abilities to recognise healthy and harmful relationships, consent culture, non-violent communication skills, recognition of and response to forms of gender-based violence. The organisation also highlighted that the programme lacked topics related to the prevention of discrimination, that it did not pay attention to raising awareness of existing prejudices regarding personal identity traits and that it did not promote initiatives aimed at understanding and accepting diversity in society. The conclusion also emphasised the importance of including measures for the prevention of sexual violence at an early age, of gender-based violence and of domestic violence.

In 2020, the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, together with the Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights, the Equal Opportunities Development Centre and the social advertising agency Nomoshiti, continued the project 'BRIDGE: strengthening local communities to effectively fight against gender-based violence in the

<sup>(63)</sup> See <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/en>.

<sup>(64)</sup> See <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WMP20220000640/O/M20220640.pdf>.

<sup>(65)</sup> See <https://www.snslp.sk/en>.

<sup>(66)</sup> See <https://www.slov-lex.sk/legislativne-procesy/SK/LP/2022/502>.

<sup>(67)</sup> See <https://www.tiesibsargs.lv/en/homepage>.

<sup>(68)</sup> See <https://lygybe.lt/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/annual-report-2021.pdf>.

close environment', the main goal of which is to enable communities to recognise and act on gender-based violence and to promote effective prevention of violence. Most of the activities implemented in the project were focused on developing education workers' competence to recognise and respond to gender-based violence in the school environment and to carry out all kinds of prevention actions in order to achieve long-term changes. In 2021, experts from the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and project partners, working together with school communities and taking into account international recommendations, prepared a guide, which provides tools for consistent and more effective implementation of gender-based violence and domestic violence prevention, to create a safe environment at school.

Equality bodies also collaborate with education authorities on **monitoring discrimination and disadvantage in schools**, including collecting data while inquiring into possible cases of discrimination experienced by learners (e.g. in Czechia<sup>(69)</sup> and Albania<sup>(70)</sup>), providing recommendations to the ministry of education and writing reports on the actual situation in schools (e.g. in Croatia<sup>(71)</sup> and Slovenia<sup>(72)</sup>) or contacting the competent institution when further investigations are needed (e.g. in Estonia<sup>(73)</sup>).

Another widespread field of cooperation is the **identification of good practices** for preventing and combating discrimination and promoting diversity and inclusion in schools. Education authorities and equality bodies share, for example, experiences, projects, educational materials and outstanding and innovative actions on equal opportunities in education (e.g. in the various autonomous communities in Spain<sup>(74)</sup>); they promote access to rights, foster the processing of complaints and support awareness-raising and/or training actions (e.g. in France<sup>(75)</sup>); they develop workshops and different actions related to the prevention of discrimination in schools (e.g. in Montenegro<sup>(76)</sup>); or they prepare equality guides for education providers (e.g. in Finland<sup>(77)</sup>).

Equality bodies and education authorities also provide **support to victims of discrimination**. In Spain<sup>(78)</sup>, for example, the Ministry of Equality, through the Council for the Elimination of Racial or Ethnic Discrimination, has a network of centres throughout the country to provide support to people who may have been victims of discrimination based on racial origin or ethnicity, whether in education or other areas. Similarly in the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, one of the main activities of Unia, the Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities<sup>(79)</sup>, is to provide students who have been treated unfairly at school with advice and legal assistance.

Equality bodies can also have a role in **policy evaluation**. Some education systems report that equality bodies monitor the implementation of laws and regulations (e.g. in Estonia<sup>(80)</sup>, Croatia<sup>(81)</sup> and Slovenia<sup>(82)</sup>), or they conduct surveys on the situation of equal opportunities in schools (e.g. in the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium<sup>(83)</sup>) and send their recommendations to the relevant ministry of education to improve or amend those legislations.

Finally, some education systems report some other areas of cooperation, including the organisation of working groups aimed at discussing specific cases of discrimination (e.g. in Czechia) or at raising awareness of issues concerning learners with special educational needs or disabilities and gender inequality (e.g. in the German-speaking Community of Belgium), and the organisation of training sessions targeting teachers and pedagogical staff (e.g. in Denmark, Spain and Malta).

In Iceland, although there is no national equality body that is part of the European Network of Equality Bodies, there is a similar body, the Office of the Ombudsman for Children<sup>(84)</sup>, that initiates formal/legal proceedings when it receives complaints regarding potential discrimination in schools. Furthermore, the body issues proposals for improvements in all matters concerning children, including education. To that end, the ombudsman can require any information from top-level authorities and has free access to all institutions for children.

In addition to cooperating with the national equality bodies, almost all top-level education authorities also cooperate with other bodies and organisations, including non-governmental organisation (NGOs),

<sup>(69)</sup> See <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1999-349>.

<sup>(70)</sup> See <https://www.kmd.al>.

<sup>(71)</sup> See <http://ombudsman.hr/propisi/Zakon%20o%20PP.pdf>.

<sup>(72)</sup> See <https://zagovornik.si/izdelki-zagovornika/priporocila>.

<sup>(73)</sup> See <https://volinik.ee/en/kasulikku/voliniku-tegevuste-ulevaade>.

<sup>(74)</sup> See <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/mc/intercambia/red-intercambia.html>.

<sup>(75)</sup> See <https://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/fr/autorite/haute-autorite-de-lutte-contre-les-discriminations-et-pour-legalite>.

<sup>(76)</sup> See <https://www.skolskiportal.edu.me/Pages/Inkluzivnoobrazovanje.aspx>.

<sup>(77)</sup> See [https://julkaisut.valtionevosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/164421/OKM\\_2022\\_44.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y](https://julkaisut.valtionevosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/164421/OKM_2022_44.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y).

<sup>(78)</sup> See <https://igualdadynodiscriminacion.igualdad.gob.es/redOficinas/portada/home.htm>.

<sup>(79)</sup> See <https://www.unia.be/en>.

<sup>(80)</sup> See <https://volinik.ee/kasulikku/voliniku-tegevuste-ulevaade>.

<sup>(81)</sup> See [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2020\\_07\\_85\\_1593.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2020_07_85_1593.html) and <http://ombudsman.hr/propisi/Zakon%20o%20PP.pdf>.

<sup>(82)</sup> See <https://zagovornik.si/izdelki-zagovornika/ocene-diskriminatomosti-predpisov>.

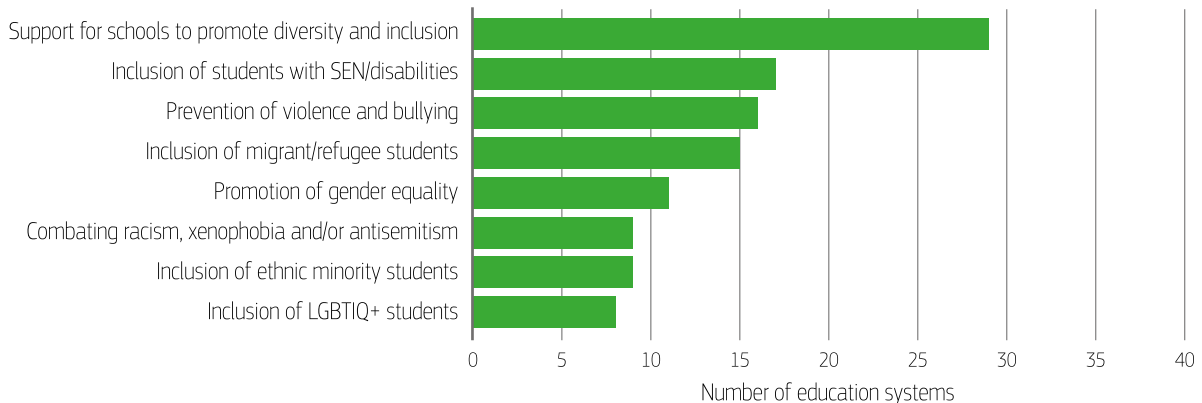
<sup>(83)</sup> See <https://www.unia.be/en/publications-statistics/publications/diversity-barometer-education-2018>.

<sup>(84)</sup> See <https://www.barn.is/english>.

on matters related to preventing and combating discrimination and promoting diversity and inclusion in education. These organisations can indeed play an essential role in raising awareness about discrimination issues at different levels and in promoting inclusion by working in close contact with education authorities, on

the one hand, and schools and local communities – and thus often with the victims of discrimination – on the other hand. Figure 2.5 shows the main fields of cooperation between top-level education authorities and other organisations active in the area of diversity and inclusion in school.

**Figure 2.5: Main fields of cooperation between top-level education authorities and other organisations active in the area of diversity and inclusion in schools, 2022/2023**



Source: Eurydice

### Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting cooperation between top-level education authorities and other organisations, for example NGOs, in the listed areas (in descending order). A country-specific overview can be found in the annex (Table 2.5A).

Most education systems report that this cooperation aims to ensure **support for schools to promote diversity and inclusion**, to foster education equality and to prevent discrimination. The Centre for Education Development in Warsaw<sup>(85)</sup> and the Centre for Education Initiatives in Latvia<sup>(86)</sup>, for example, organise training, conferences, seminars and workshops targeting schools and teaching staff in order to strengthen inclusive education. The Danish Centre for Teaching Environment<sup>(87)</sup> produces, processes and disseminates research and survey results, so that relevant knowledge feeds into initiatives that aim to strengthen the well-being and inclusion of children and improve the learning environment. The Cypriot project ‘school and social inclusion actions’<sup>(88)</sup>, co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), aims to mitigate the negative impact of the economic crisis on education and to prevent the social exclusion of vulnerable groups of learners through various measures, including programmes to reinforce learning, psychosocial support for students and their families and providing technological equipment.

Apart from this general type of support, education systems collaborate with other organisations to provide targeted support to learners at risk of discrimination. One widespread field of cooperation concerns actions aimed at the **inclusion of students with special educational needs or disabilities**.

The Swedish Agency for Participation<sup>(89)</sup>, for example, develops and spreads information about obstacles to participation experienced by children with disability. In Spain, the State Confederation of Deaf People<sup>(90)</sup> and the Spanish Confederation of Families of Deaf People<sup>(91)</sup> develop actions aimed at providing quality educational care that directly affects deaf or hearing-impaired students, and publish research papers, studies or materials that are developed as a result of joint actions.

Some education systems report cooperation with other organisations on specific matters such as the **prevention of violence and bullying**, for example in Iceland, where the Advisory Board on Bullying<sup>(92)</sup> provides advice and support to the school community or investigates cases of bullying when a school or municipality has not been able to solve a case in a satisfactory manner.

<sup>(85)</sup> See <https://www.ore.edu.pl/2018/01/centre-for-education-development>.

<sup>(86)</sup> See <https://iic.lv/about-cei>.

<sup>(87)</sup> See <https://dcum.dk>.

<sup>(88)</sup> See [http://www.moec.gov.cy/eayp/dراسي\\_drase.html](http://www.moec.gov.cy/eayp/dراسي_drase.html).

<sup>(89)</sup> See <https://www.mfd.se>.

<sup>(90)</sup> See <http://www.cnse.es/inmigracion/index.php?lang=en>.

<sup>(91)</sup> See <http://www.fiapas.es>.

<sup>(92)</sup> See [https://vefir.mms.is/flettibaekur/namsefni/fagrad\\_eineltismala\\_ens/2](https://vefir.mms.is/flettibaekur/namsefni/fagrad_eineltismala_ens/2).

Education systems also report cooperation with independent organisations that focuses on the **inclusion of migrant and refugee students**, as in the case of Czechia<sup>(93)</sup> and Luxembourg (see the country example below).

In **Luxembourg**, the Mediation Service<sup>(94)</sup> is responsible for keeping students in school, and for their inclusion and integration. This entity deals with complaints and grievances related to students at risk of leaving school early, but also with matters related to the inclusion of students with special educational needs and the integration of children from a migrant background. The school mediator's mission is to handle situations in which the school is either not providing adequate training or not functioning in accordance with the mission it is entrusted with, or in which the school or the service under the authority of the minister in charge of national education is not complying with the laws, regulations or other instructions in force. The mediator assists the students (and their parents) in this process. To do so, and when a complaint is considered by the school mediator to be justified, an investigation is undertaken and, after having discussed the matter with the different services and/or schools involved, the mediator can, if necessary, formulate a recommendation to the school or the service under the authority of the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth. The school mediator can provide advice to the different services and schools involved, suggest solutions or make recommendations to the minister in charge of national education in Luxembourg. These proposals are intended to improve the functioning of the services and schools in which the mediator has had to intervene. The mediator draws up an annual report relating to their field of activity in which useful recommendations are reiterated. The report, which is published on the website of the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth, is sent to parliament and to the government.

Education authorities and other organisations also work together for the **promotion of gender equality**, with actions aimed at monitoring gender equality and producing practical examples and concrete tools for the implementation of gender equality in schools (e.g. the Swedish Gender Equality Agency<sup>(95)</sup> and the projects carried out in Portugal; see the country example below).

In **Portugal**, 'CCC goes to school'<sup>(96)</sup> is an artistic-pedagogical project of the non-profit Crowned Hearts Association, approved by the Ministry of Education in 2016; it reinforces the importance of female and male students knowing their rights. Aimed at ninth-grade students, it consists of a game to be performed in a classroom context, followed by pedagogical exercises with the class, led by a CCC technician. The game aims to promote reflection on issues in everyday school life such as violence, bullying and cyberbullying. This project has support from the Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality and has reached over 130 schools and school centres and more than 7 762 students.

Under the European Economic Area and Norway grants, 'I'gualPro – professions have no gender'<sup>(97)</sup> is an action-research project promoted by the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment, with the main objective of combating sexual segregation in the educational and vocational choices of girls and boys and the consequent segregation of professional choices. This is done by deconstructing the stereotypes associated with the different areas of study and professions, with a special focus on areas in which there is effective segregation between girls and boys.

Furthermore, there is collaboration with organisations on **combating racism, xenophobia and/or antisemitism**, as in the case of the Directorate of Evaluation, Forecasting and Performance Monitoring (DEPP)<sup>(98)</sup> in France, which regularly provides statistics on harassment to the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights. In Spain, OBERAXE<sup>(99)</sup> compiles and analyses data on racism and xenophobia in society, including education, to monitor the situation and prospects for evolution through an information network.

A few education systems report official cooperation to promote the **inclusion of ethnic minority students** in schools. In Bulgaria, for example, the Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities<sup>(100)</sup> develops, implements and finances programmes and projects for a sustainable process of educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities and the development of intercultural education.

<sup>(93)</sup> See <https://meta-ops.eu/home>.

<sup>(94)</sup> See <https://men.public.lu/fr/publications/rapports-activite-ministere/autres-rapports/service-mediation-scolaire-2021.html>.

<sup>(95)</sup> See <https://jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se>.

<sup>(96)</sup> See [http://www.aemiraflores.edu.pt/joomla2/docs/ccc\\_vai\\_escola.pdf](http://www.aemiraflores.edu.pt/joomla2/docs/ccc_vai_escola.pdf).

<sup>(97)</sup> See <https://eeagrants.org/archive/2014-2021/projects/PT-WORKLIFE-0017>.

<sup>(98)</sup> See <https://www.education.gouv.fr/les-enquetes-nationales-de-climat-scolaire-et-de-victimation-323459>.

<sup>(99)</sup> See <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/index.htm>.

<sup>(100)</sup> See <https://coiduem.mon.bg>.



Finally, the number of education systems that report collaborating with other organisations is smallest in the case of advancing the **inclusion of LGBTIQ+ students**. Some indicate general actions such as the provision of information, teaching and courses on a variety of issues regarding sex, gender, body and sexuality (e.g. in Denmark <sup>(101)</sup> and Sweden <sup>(102)</sup>); others mention more specific support to students in coming out, to transgender students in their transition and in general to address homophobic and transphobic bullying (e.g. in Malta <sup>(103)</sup>).

## 2.5. Summary

Monitoring discrimination in schools is an important element in the promotion of diversity and inclusion in education. Most European countries report having top-level bodies in charge of monitoring cases of discrimination, including in school education. However, at the same time, over half of the education systems indicate not having access to comprehensive data on the main grounds of discrimination in schools. Most education systems with available data report special educational needs or disability and ethnic background as the most common grounds of discrimination in schools; gender, nationality, sex, religious affiliation, socioeconomic background and sexual orientation are reported as grounds for discrimination comparatively less frequently. This may be due to under-reporting, or to instances when it is difficult to prove that discrimination has taken place.

Most education authorities across Europe report having access to disaggregated student data on individual student characteristics. The data refer most frequently to the sex and/or gender of students, the presence of students with special educational needs or disabilities, nationality, country of birth and socioeconomic background. Fewer than half of the education systems report access to data on students' refugee/asylum seeker or migration background and the language spoken at home, and only a minority of them have access to data concerning the ethnic background and religious affiliation of their learners.

Education systems report using disaggregated student data mainly as a tool for policy development and/or evaluation as they provide evidence-based information, which can help understand the impact of a certain measure on a specific group of learners. Disaggregated data are also used to provide support to learners or to help schools plan appropriate programmes of intervention, using resources where they are needed the most.

All education systems report that they cooperate with independent bodies and/or organisations, including national equality bodies, to address discrimination in school education. Among the most common fields of cooperation are policy development and support for schools to promote diversity and inclusion, to foster education equality and to prevent discrimination.

<sup>(101)</sup> See <https://sexogsamfund.dk/en>.

<sup>(102)</sup> See <https://www.mucf.se/sites/default/files/2019/08/oppna-skolan-2019.pdf>.

<sup>(103)</sup> See <https://educationservices.gov.mt/en/NSSS/Documents/Policy%20on%20Inclusive%20Education%20in%20Schools.pdf>.

# Chapter 3: Top-level legislation, strategies and action plans promoting diversity and inclusion in schools

Promoting diversity and inclusion in schools can be approached in a variety of ways. International and European legal frameworks and declarations, such as those mentioned in Chapter 1, express the common goal of prohibiting all forms of discrimination in education and achieving equal educational opportunities. These instruments provide an important basis for the development and implementation of national policy frameworks and actions, which can help remove existing barriers to education and promote equality, diversity and inclusion in schools systematically (UNESCO, 2018).

This chapter presents some of the main top-level legislation, strategies and action plans for promoting diversity and inclusion in schools that are currently in force across Europe. In other words, it shows the existing overarching policy frameworks that address

issues related to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in education, and preventing and combating discrimination and other barriers to access to, and participation in, schools.

The results show that such policy frameworks exist in all education systems and, nearly everywhere, they cover all school education levels, that is, primary to upper secondary education. The data collection did not investigate the implementation or impact of the existing policy frameworks. However, their existence points to the commitment of European education systems to address some of the challenges and barriers faced by learners, teachers and schools. The challenges and barriers can be overcome if adequate resources (financial, human, physical, etc.) are available and monitoring and evaluation of the results are ensured to realise the strategic objectives (UNESCO, 2018).

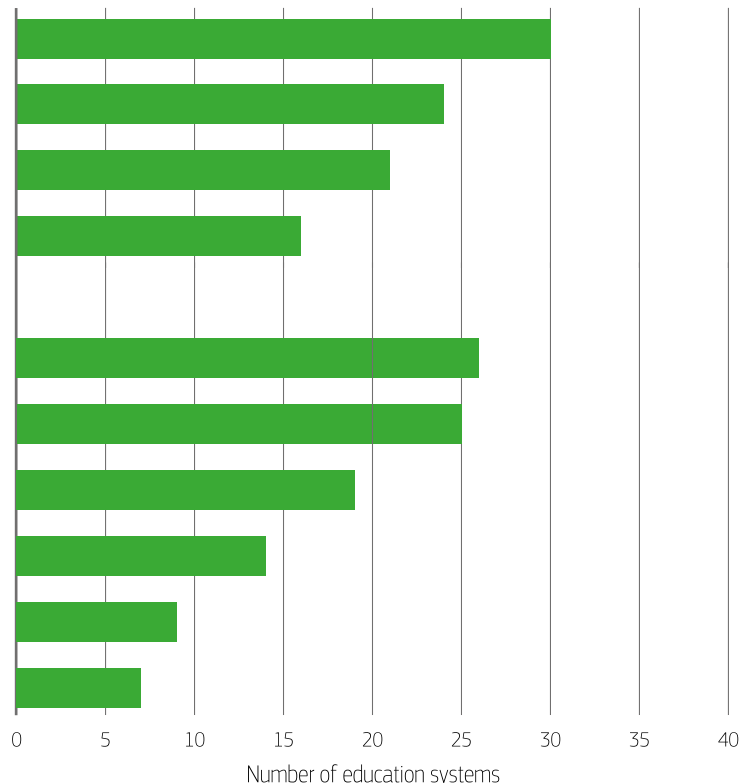
**Figure 3.1: Main aims of top-level legislation, strategies and action plans promoting diversity and inclusion in schools, 2022/2023**

**BROADER STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORKS**

- Improving the education system, including through inclusive education, equal access and support
- Preventing discrimination and promoting equal opportunities, including in education
- Improving academic outcomes and/or reducing ELET
- Promoting inclusive education

**TARGETED STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORKS**

- Promoting participation and inclusion of Roma students
- Inclusion and support to students with SEN/disabilities
- Promoting diversity and inclusion of migrant/refugee students
- Promoting gender equality
- Combating antisemitism
- Combating discrimination of LGBTIQ+ students



Source: Eurydice

### Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting at least one top-level law, strategy or action plan devoted to the listed main aims (in descending order). It distinguishes between strategic policy frameworks with a broader main aim and those that focus on a specific type of discrimination or groups of students. A country-specific overview can be found in the annex (Table 3.1A).

Figure 3.1 (and the analysis below) provides an overview of the main aims of the reported top-level legislation, strategies and action plans promoting diversity and inclusion in schools. It shows the number of European education systems stating that they have at least one corresponding policy framework currently in force. The figure distinguishes between broader policy frameworks aiming to improve the education system and learning outcomes, prevent discrimination and promote inclusive education, on the one hand, and those that are specifically targeted at certain forms of discrimination or groups of students, on the other hand. The former sometimes refer to groups of learners who are disadvantaged and/or at risk of discrimination; however, the latter often address in more detail, the challenges faced by these groups and the actions that need to be taken.

### 3.1. Broader strategic policy frameworks promoting diversity and inclusion

Among the broader policy frameworks, the most widely reported top-level legislation, strategies and action plans aim to generally **improve the education system**, that is, they are broad education laws, strategies and similar official documents that intend to regulate and enhance the quality of school education through, among other things, a focus on promoting inclusive education, equal access and support. In some education systems – such as those in Czechia (see the country example below), Latvia<sup>(104)</sup> and Slovakia<sup>(105)</sup> – these overarching policy frameworks emphasise the need for schools to fundamentally cater for the learning and well-being of all children. Some of the policy frameworks also highlight the needs of specific groups of learners, such as those with special educational

needs (e.g. in Denmark<sup>(106)</sup> or Italy<sup>(107)</sup>), from migrant backgrounds (e.g. in Cyprus<sup>(108)</sup>) or from less favourable socioeconomic backgrounds (e.g. Slovenia<sup>(109)</sup>), or they emphasise the importance of ensuring gender equality (e.g. in Sweden<sup>(110)</sup>). In other education systems (e.g. in Estonia<sup>(111)</sup>, France<sup>(112)</sup> and Malta<sup>(113)</sup>), the general policy frameworks underline principles and measures of inclusive education, and equal access and support for all learners, regardless of their sex, nationality, socioeconomic background, special educational needs, etc.

The strategy for the education policy of **Czechia** up to 2030+<sup>(114)</sup> aims to prepare the education system of Czechia for new challenges, and to address the problems that persist within the Czech education system. Strategy 2030+ describes the priorities to be addressed in the specified period, especially in the field of school education and early childhood education and care (i.e. ISCED levels 0–3), non-formal learning and lifelong learning. The strategy has two main objectives: the first is to transform the content of education, with a focus on strengthening the competences needed for an active civic, professional and personal life; the second is to reduce inequalities in access to quality education and to enable the maximum development of the potential of all children and students. The second objective is further developed through the following strategic lines:

- inclusive education – provide equitable opportunities for access to quality education for all students; strive for a common environment and to provide for the educational needs of all students regardless of their personal characteristics or socioeconomic circumstances;

<sup>(104)</sup> The 2021–2027 education development guidelines (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/324332-par-izglitiba-attistibas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam>).

<sup>(105)</sup> The 2018–2027 national programme of education development (<https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/13450.pdf>).

<sup>(106)</sup> Danish primary and lower secondary school act, 2022 (<https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/ta/2022/1396>); Danish upper secondary school act, 2022 (<https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/ta/2022/957>).

<sup>(107)</sup> Education Reform Law n. 107/2015 (<https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2015-07-13:107>) and Legislative Decree No 66 on 'standards for the promotion of school inclusion of students with disabilities' (<https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legislativo:2017:066>).

<sup>(108)</sup> Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth 2023–2025 strategic plan ([http://archeia.moec.gov.cy/mc/642/stratigjiko\\_schedio\\_ypan\\_2023\\_2025.pdf](http://archeia.moec.gov.cy/mc/642/stratigjiko_schedio_ypan_2023_2025.pdf)).

<sup>(109)</sup> Organisation and financing of education act, 2021 ([https://zakonodaja.sio.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2011/08/ZOFVI\\_okt21\\_spremembe\\_EN\\_dop\\_211118.pdf](https://zakonodaja.sio.si/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2011/08/ZOFVI_okt21_spremembe_EN_dop_211118.pdf)).

<sup>(110)</sup> Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and the leisure-time centre 2022 (<https://www.skolverket.se/getFile?file=9718>).

<sup>(111)</sup> Basic schools and upper secondary schools act, in force since 2010 (<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/509112022002/consolide>).

<sup>(112)</sup> See the systematic approach in France to address diversity and inclusion by combining cultural, structural and personal features <https://www.education.gouv.fr/une-nouvelle-dynamique-pour-la-formation-et-la-vie-de-l-eleve-depuis-2017-325157>.

<sup>(113)</sup> The 2014–2024 framework for the education strategy for Malta (<https://educationservices.gov.mt/en/resources/documents/policy%20documents%202014/booklet%20esm%202014-2024%20eng%2019-02.pdf>).

<sup>(114)</sup> See [https://www.msmt.cz/uploads/brozura\\_S2030\\_en\\_fin\\_online.pdf](https://www.msmt.cz/uploads/brozura_S2030_en_fin_online.pdf).

improve the quality of education in schools and regions that are lagging behind other parts of the education system and support teachers in developing the potential of all students;

- individualisation of teaching – individualise teaching and introduce didactic practices to enable the education of diverse groups; strengthen teachers' competences in innovative forms and methods of work that take gender equality into account, with an emphasis on factors specific to girls' or boys' education;
- pedagogical work – revise the framework curricula, making it possible to differentiate teaching in accordance with students' needs, and by providing training and mentoring for teachers; strengthen formative assessment methods in schools, as these promote learning and encourage students to take responsibility; focus some of the financial and non-financial support on strengthening and improving the quality of teaching staff in underperforming regions and schools;
- external differentiation – provide greater financial and methodical support to schools with a concentration of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, in particular to ensure funding for support activities and programmes; reduce the drop-out rate and create conditions for early leavers to achieve qualifications; at the same time, reduce the number of students achieving very low levels of literacy and strengthen the quality of education in schools and regions with a high proportion of such students, thereby reducing inter- and intra-regional disparities in educational achievement;
- experience success – create opportunities for all students to experience educational success, regardless of their socioeconomic or family background, health condition or any other disadvantage;
- cooperation with families – promote parental responsibility in care and education, and a parental role in education; strengthen cooperation between the family and the school, both by educating teachers and by providing methodical support to school councils, improving information and increasing mutual trust; professionally train schools and teachers to communicate effectively with parents; in the interministerial field, focus on the early awareness of parents of children and students from disadvantaged backgrounds so that they realise the importance of preschool and quality primary and lower secondary education and, by cooperating with the school, support their children on the path towards developing the competences they will need in life.

Next most common after top-level legislation, strategies and action plans that aim to improve education systems overall are those that have a thematic focus on **preventing discrimination and promoting equal opportunities** (reported by over half of the education systems). This includes anti-discrimination legislation that also covers the area of education and national anti-racism action plans, called for by the EU anti-racism action plan<sup>(115)</sup>, that include a focus on school education (e.g. in the Netherlands<sup>(116)</sup> or Portugal; see the country example below). Some countries' strategic frameworks in this area have a focus on other specific forms of discrimination, such as segregation (e.g. in Romania<sup>(117)</sup>), or they stress the importance of promoting equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age (e.g. in Sweden<sup>(118)</sup>).

Following the EU anti-racism action plan, the 2021–2025 national plan to combat racism and discrimination<sup>(119)</sup> was prepared during the **Portuguese** Presidency of the Council of the EU, and it defines an integrated strategy with both transversal and specific approaches. As recommended by the Portuguese parliament, the national plan recognises racism as a structural problem and identifies key areas of intervention, from education to security, justice, health, housing, employment and data collection. The national plan upholds equality, strongly opposes segregation and affirms a vision of the community that rejects any form of marginalisation of its citizens and fights structural inequalities. The main measures proposed by the national plan in the area of education include the following:

- to diversify curriculum development, namely through enhancement of 'essential learning' (*Aprendizagens Essenciais*), the use of images and resources on diversity and the historical presence of discriminated groups, discrimination and racism processes, including historical colonialism and slavery processes;

<sup>(115)</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A0565%3AFIN>.

<sup>(116)</sup> National programme against discrimination and racism 2022 (<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2022/08/30/nationaal-programma-tegen-discriminatie-en-racisme-2022>).

<sup>(117)</sup> Framework order on the prohibition of school segregation in pre-university education institutions, 2016 (<https://www.edu.ro/ordin-cadru-nr-613421122016-privind-interzicerea-segreg%C4%83rii-%C8%99colare-%C3%AEunit%C4%83%C8%9Bile-de-%C3%AEenv%C4%83%C8%9B%C4%83m%C3%A2nt>).

<sup>(118)</sup> Discrimination act, 2008 (<https://www.do.se/choose-language/english/discrimination-act-2008567>).

<sup>(119)</sup> National plan to combat racism and discrimination 2021–2025 (<https://www.portugal.gov.pt/download-ficheiros/ficheiro.aspx?v=%3d%3dBQAAAB%2bLCAAAAAAABAAzNDI3NgYAMqHeagUAAAA%3d>).

- to provide teaching resources that promote education geared towards equality and non-discrimination, including accounts of historical facts and their impact on modern-day racism;
- to promote ethnic and racial equality in the educational process, implement mechanisms in schools with a view to empowering victims of discrimination (designed to listen, record, intervene and support), and collect data on schooling (e.g. retention, completion, drop-out rate);
- to promote Portuguese host language (PLA) courses;
- to strengthen the fight against racism and discrimination in measures such as the programme for priority intervention educational areas (TEIP), the Network of Schools for Intercultural Education (REEI) and the *escolhas* programme, adapting and improving the initiatives developed in these areas;
- to promote knowledge of books, without discriminating against persons or groups, through the national reading plan (PNL), and to strengthen dissemination by the School Libraries Network of educational proposals for reading, arts and culture, integrated in the curriculum, from an interdisciplinary, critical and emancipatory perspective;
- to enhance the theme of inclusion within the projects supported by the Erasmus+ programme, which has chosen this theme as one of its cross-cutting priorities with a view to eliminating discriminatory practices associated with the education and training systems.

Top-level legislation, strategies and action plans aiming specifically to **improve academic outcomes and/or to reduce ELET** are reported in slightly over half of all European education systems. These policy frameworks generally intend to provide universal and targeted support to tackle educational disadvantage and improve students' learning experiences and outcomes. In some education systems – such as those in Hungary<sup>(120)</sup>, the Netherlands<sup>(121)</sup> and Portugal<sup>(122)</sup> – the targeted support includes a

<sup>(120)</sup> The 2021–2030 public education strategy (<https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2020-1551-30-22>).

<sup>(121)</sup> Letter to the House of Representatives on vision on equality of opportunity in basic education, 2023 (<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2023/03/10/aan-de-tweede-kamer-visie-kansengelijkheid-funderend-onderwijs>), and Letter to the House of Representatives on the school and school environment programme in primary education, 2022 ([https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2022/07/07/programma-school-en-omgeving-in-het-funderend-onderwijs#:~:text=Minister%20Wiersma%20\(Primair%20en%20Voortgezet,het%20onderwijs%20en%20de%20omgeving\)](https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2022/07/07/programma-school-en-omgeving-in-het-funderend-onderwijs#:~:text=Minister%20Wiersma%20(Primair%20en%20Voortgezet,het%20onderwijs%20en%20de%20omgeving))).

<sup>(122)</sup> Programme for priority intervention educational areas (<http://www.dge.mec.pt/teip>).

specific focus on students and schools affected by socioeconomic disadvantage. Similarly, a policy framework in Italy<sup>(123)</sup> sets out special interventions aimed at reducing territorial disparities at the secondary level and combating school leaving. In Estonia (see the country example below), the strategy aiming to improve academic outcomes and reduce ELET includes a specific focus on supporting learners with special educational needs and/or those from migrant backgrounds.

The general objective of the 2021–2035 **Estonian** education strategy<sup>(124)</sup> is to equip the population with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them to fulfil their potential in their personal, occupational and social lives and to contribute to promoting the quality of life in Estonia and to global sustainable development. Under the first strategic goal (diverse and accessible learning opportunities), there is a special focus on ensuring flexible learning opportunities, accessibility of high-quality education and supported learning to reduce drop-out and early school leaving rates, and to exploit every individual's potential to the fullest. Actions under this goal include the development and implementation of a holistic approach to supporting learners with special educational needs and/or those from a migrant background.

The least widely reported main aim of broader top-level legislation, strategies and action plans (reported by over one third of the education systems) is **promoting inclusive education**. Among the education systems indicating such policy frameworks is the one in Italy, where legislation dating back to 1977<sup>(125)</sup> abolishes differential classes and establishes the principle of inclusion for all learners with disabilities in primary and secondary schools. Other education systems with strategies in this area include those in Spain<sup>(126)</sup>, Malta<sup>(127)</sup>, Slovakia

<sup>(123)</sup> Reduction of territorial disparities and combating school leaving for 2022–2024 (<https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/6739250/Orientamenti+per+l%27attuazione+degli+interventi+nelle+scuole+%281%29.pdf/2613376a-03b7-8957-a2a9-b80b0e5f99df?t=1657797058216>).

<sup>(124)</sup> The 2021–2030 education strategy (<https://www.hm.ee/en/ministry/ministry/strategic-planning-2021-2035#edu>).

<sup>(125)</sup> Rules on the assessment of pupils and the abolition of remedial examinations and other rules modifying the school system, Law 517/1977 (art 2. and 7) (<https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1977/08/18/077U0517/sg>).

<sup>(126)</sup> Organic Law 2/2006, of 3 May, on education, as amended by Organic Law 3/2020, of 29 December (<https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2006-7899#a4>).

<sup>(127)</sup> A policy on inclusive education in schools, 2022 (<https://web.archive.org/web/20230305111223/https://education.gov.mt/en/NSSS/Documents/Policy%20on%20Inclusive%20Education%20in%20Schools.pdf>).

(see the country example below) and Montenegro <sup>(128)</sup>; the main goal of these strategies is to ensure that all learners have access to quality instruction, intervention and support to experience success in learning within an inclusive education system. This means that education should be available and accessible to all learners of all ages, including those facing challenges, students with special educational needs or disabilities, those from migrant backgrounds or from socioeconomic or geographically disadvantaged backgrounds, and regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion and sexual orientation.

The 2021–2030 **Slovak** strategy of an inclusive approach in education <sup>(129)</sup> is a document aimed at improving the current situation in the area of education for all children and students in schools, without any distinction. The document presents the basic philosophy of inclusive education in early childhood settings, elementary schools, secondary schools and universities. The focus is therefore not only on schools, but also on other educational institutions, and not only on formal education, but also on informal education. The main goal is an inclusive education system that provides education to all with respect for individual differences and the diverse educational needs of every child and student. At the same time, the inclusive approach aims to support the development of every person involved in the lives of the children and students. All children and students should have the opportunity to develop their personal potential in the school closest to their place of residence (or that they decide to attend). Schools must respect the uniqueness of each person and provide education, education methods and forms of assessment adapted to the individual child and student. The supporting part of the strategy is represented by six priority areas: inclusive education and support measures; educational counselling and prevention; desegregation in education and training; removing educational barriers; preparation and education of teaching staff and professional staff; and destigmatisation.

### 3.2. Targeted strategic policy frameworks promoting diversity and inclusion

Among the top-level legislation, strategies and action plans promoting diversity and inclusion that focus on a specific form of discrimination or target group, the most widely reported ones are related to **promoting the participation and inclusion of Roma students**. These policy frameworks – including those that can be found in, for example, Bulgaria (see the country example below), Italy <sup>(130)</sup>, Lithuania <sup>(131)</sup> and Austria <sup>(132)</sup> – are mostly broader Roma integration strategies, covering different areas of life, including education. In Slovenia, there are both: a broader Roma inclusion strategy covering different areas of life, including education <sup>(133)</sup>, and a specific strategy and action plan for the inclusion of Roma students in schools <sup>(134)</sup>.

The national strategy of the Republic of **Bulgaria** for equality, inclusion and participation of the Roma (2021–2030) <sup>(135)</sup> is a framework document that sets out guidelines for the implementation of policies for socioeconomic inclusion and participation of the Roma. In this document, the term ‘Roma’ is used as an umbrella term. It includes groups of people who have more or less similar, but not identical, cultural and social characteristics. Their self-identification can also vary. In Bulgaria, there is a tendency for some of the people who are perceived by the surrounding population as Roma to identify themselves as Bulgarians, Turks, Romanians, etc. Not all Roma are subject to social exclusion, but all of them may be discriminated against and deprived of their rights. The strategy applies a common and targeted integrated approach to vulnerable citizens of Roma origin, and it includes support for disadvantaged people from other ethnic groups as well. To achieve the long-term goal of ensuring effective equality and reducing disparities

<sup>(128)</sup> The 2019–2025 inclusive education strategy (<https://www.skolskiportal.edu.me/Inkluzivno%20obrazovanje/Strategija%20Inkluzivnog%20obrazovanja%202019-2025.pdf>).

<sup>(129)</sup> See <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/23120.pdf>.

<sup>(130)</sup> The 2021–2023 national strategy for equality, inclusion and participation of Roma and Sinti (<https://unar.it/portale/web/guest/strategia-rsc-2020-2030>).

<sup>(131)</sup> Plan of measures for the integration of Roma into Lithuanian society for 2022–2023 (<http://www.romuplatforma.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/1/C4%AEsakymas-d%C4%97I-Rom%C5%B3-integracijos-%C4%AF-Lietuvos-visualomen%C4%99-priemoni%C5%B3-plano-2022%E2%80%932023-patvirtinimo-%C4%AEV-33-2022-07-01.pdf>).

<sup>(132)</sup> Austrian Roma strategy (<https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/themen/volksgruppen/roma-strategie.html>).

<sup>(133)</sup> The 2021–2030 national programme of actions of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Roma ([https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MIZS/SRI/Romi/sprejetNPUR\\_21\\_30.pdf](https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MIZS/SRI/Romi/sprejetNPUR_21_30.pdf)).

<sup>(134)</sup> The 2021–2023 strategy for the education of Roma learners (<https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MIZS/SRI/Romi/Strategija-VIZ-Romov-2021-2030.docx>).

<sup>(135)</sup> The 2021–2030 national strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for equality, inclusion and participation of the Roma (<https://nccedi.government.bg/en/node/451>).

between the Roma and the rest of the population, the strategy – following the approach set out in the EU Roma strategic framework <sup>(136)</sup> – sets three horizontal objectives in the fields of equality, inclusion and participation, and four sectoral objectives, in the fields of education, health, housing and employment.

The overall goal in the area of education is to create conditions for the implementation of quality and inclusive education; for the educational integration of children and students from vulnerable groups, including the Roma; and for establishing intercultural education. The related objectives are as follows:

- effective coverage, inclusion and reintegration of children and students from vulnerable groups, including Roma, in compulsory preschool and school;
- providing conditions for the implementation of inclusive education and educational integration of children and students from vulnerable groups, including Roma;
- improving the quality of education in kindergartens and schools with a concentration of children and students from vulnerable groups, including Roma;
- overcoming the processes of differentiation (so-called segregation and secondary segregation) in kindergartens and schools through educational measures for desegregation;
- preservation and development of the cultural identity of children and students with various ethnocultural markers, including Roma, through the promotion of intercultural education, as an integral part of the process of modernisation of the Bulgarian educational system;
- effective 'educational institution–family' interaction with a focus on parents from vulnerable groups, including Roma;
- encourage the participation of persons from vulnerable groups, including Roma, in continuing education and/or vocational training and/or higher education.

Specific top-level legislation, strategies and action plans dedicated to the **inclusion of and support to students with special educational needs or disabilities** are also very widely reported. Most of these policy frameworks establish the right of such students to education in mainstream settings, promote the development of inclusive teaching environments

<sup>(136)</sup> See the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0620>).

and determine the support to be provided (see the country example below; see also Chapter 4, Section 4.1). Some recent strategic policy documents in this area have a particular thematic focus, for example, on ensuring not only physical accessibility, but also digital accessibility for learners with special educational needs (e.g. in Greece <sup>(137)</sup>) or ensuring equality, equity and protection from discrimination for students with disabilities in inclusive educational settings (e.g. in Montenegro <sup>(138)</sup>).

**Austria's 2022–2030 national disability action plan** <sup>(139)</sup> is the second policy strategy of the federal government aiming to further implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in force since 2008). It covers many areas of life and proposes measures to improve the living conditions of people with disabilities in a sustainable manner. In the area of school education, the action plan underlines the government's commitment to establish an inclusive teaching and learning culture. This means creating participatory and inclusive education and training opportunities adapted to students' needs and talents. Promoting diversity is the central guiding principle. Concretely, the action plan proposes the following objectives:

- evaluation of the nationwide practice of determining special educational needs;
- promoting inclusion as a cross-cutting issue to be considered in current and future reforms;
- development and testing of competence centres for inclusive education to provide comprehensive special needs and educational inclusion expertise;
- strengthening of cooperation in multiprofessional teams;
- further development and legal anchoring of inclusive educational offers (with special consideration to Austrian sign language);
- best possible integration of students with specific educational needs in mainstream classes;
- expansion of inclusion and strengthening of cooperation between mainstream and special schools within the framework of school clusters;

<sup>(137)</sup> The 2020 national action plan for the rights of people with disabilities (<https://www.primeminister.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-ethniko-sxedio-drasis-amea.pdf>).

<sup>(138)</sup> The 2022–2027 strategy for the protection of persons with disabilities from discrimination and promotion of equality (<https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/e9659c4e-e7f6-41f2-ab98-0fd115b80601>).

<sup>(139)</sup> See <https://www.sozialministerium.at/Themen/Soziales/Menschenmit-Behinderungen/Nationaler-Aktionsplan-Behinderung.html>.

- enabling inclusion at the upper secondary level with a view to achieving the educational goals of those schools;
- increasing the number of educational qualifications of students with disabilities or impairments at the upper secondary level.

Around half of the education systems report specific strategic policy frameworks **promoting diversity and the inclusion of students from migrant backgrounds and/or refugee students**. These policy frameworks generally aim to guide the integration, schooling and support of newly arrived students and/or those who have not mastered the language of schooling. Some policy frameworks falling into this category have a particular thematic focus, for example on mother tongue teaching (e.g. in Denmark <sup>(140)</sup>), or are based on the principles of intercultural education (e.g. in Greece <sup>(141)</sup>). In other education systems, the policy frameworks target refugee students in general (e.g. in Germany <sup>(142)</sup>) or students from Ukraine more specifically (e.g. in Czechia <sup>(143)</sup> and Spain (see the country example below)).

The **Spanish** contingency plan for comprehensive educational attention to learners from Ukraine <sup>(144)</sup> states in its first point that, in accordance with the law, public administrations should take steps to integrate newly arrived students into the educational system. Their schooling should be adapted to each student's characteristics and needs, and taking into account the student's age. Subsequently, after evaluation of the student's academic ability, it can be adapted as appropriate. The plan also states that educational administrations (national and regional) should have the necessary competence to develop specific programmes for students with severe linguistic deficiencies, and to advise the students' parents or guardians on the rights, duties and opportunities that integration into the Spanish educational system entails. Spain has granted temporary protection to Ukrainians displaced by the conflict. Beneficiaries of temporary protection who do not have sufficient resources may benefit

from social and health services. The educational administrations with powers of execution and regulatory development, beyond basic legislation, are the autonomous communities, with the exception of Ceuta and Melilla, two autonomous cities whose educational powers are vested in the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MEFP). This implies that the actions of schooling, integration and educational support, and the investments that accompany them, will be developed by the autonomous communities on the basis of the general guidelines set by the MEFP. In Ceuta and Melilla, the MEFP is responsible for all actions.

Fewer education systems (around one third) reported top-level legislation, strategies and action plans **promoting gender equality**. In some cases – such as in Czechia <sup>(145)</sup>, Portugal <sup>(146)</sup> and Slovakia <sup>(147)</sup> – these policy frameworks include overarching strategies that aim to promote equality and equal opportunities between women and men in different areas of life, including in education. In other cases – for example in France (see the country example below) and Austria <sup>(148)</sup> – there are specific gender equality frameworks in the area of education. In Spain, a recently introduced law <sup>(149)</sup> provides for the integration in schools and curricula of content related to gender equality and sexual education, including the appropriate and critical use of the internet and other technologies to raise awareness and prevent sexual violence.

In **France**, a gender equality label <sup>(150)</sup> for secondary schools was introduced in March 2022. It aims to make visible all the actions undertaken in the pedagogical and educational fields to promote equality, whether in teaching or other learning situations, in activities carried out at the class or school level, in school life and school democracy, or in the management of spaces and relations between the school, its environment and its partners. Obtaining the label is a voluntary process that takes place over time. The three main objectives that need to be met to acquire the label are to create a culture of respect, to fight all forms of gender-based and sexual violence and

<sup>(140)</sup> Ministerial act on mother tongue teaching, 2014 (<https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/2014/689>).

<sup>(141)</sup> Measures for education in Greek language and intercultural education (<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/prosf-ekpaideusi>).

<sup>(142)</sup> Declaration on the integration of young refugees through education, 2016 ([https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2016/2016\\_10\\_06-Erklaerung-Integration.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2016/2016_10_06-Erklaerung-Integration.pdf)).

<sup>(143)</sup> Law on measures in the field of education in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine provoked by the invasion of troops of the Russian Federation, 2022 (<https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2022-67>).

<sup>(144)</sup> Spanish contingency plan for comprehensive educational attention to displaced Ukrainian students, 2022 (<https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2022-5288>).

<sup>(145)</sup> The 2021–2030 gender equality strategy ([https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/Aktuality/Strategie\\_rovnosti\\_zen\\_a\\_muzu.pdf](https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/Aktuality/Strategie_rovnosti_zen_a_muzu.pdf)).

<sup>(146)</sup> The 2018–2030 national strategy for equality and non-discrimination (<https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc21/consulta-publica?i=231>).

<sup>(147)</sup> The 2021–2027 strategy for equality between women and men and equal opportunities (<https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/25845/1>).

<sup>(148)</sup> Action plan on reflective gender education and equality, 2018 (<https://rundschriften.bmbwf.gv.at/rundschriften/?id=793>).

<sup>(149)</sup> Organic Law 10/2022, of 6 September, on the integral guarantee of sexual freedom (<https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2022-14630#a7>).

<sup>(150)</sup> See <https://www.education.gouv.fr/bo/22/Hebdo11/MENE2207942C.htm>.



to fight gender stereotypes. The label considers all aspects of a global policy of equality between girls and boys and defines five levers of action: school management, staff training, educational policy and school life, diversity- and equality-based pedagogy, and partnerships and outreach. Any institution can apply for the label.

Applications for the gender equality label must reflect a committed and long-term process, whether the approach is recent or already established. It cannot be based on temporary actions. All schools can apply for the label, regardless of the current situation and the resources available locally to develop partnerships. A school that engages in the process of observing the existing situation and making visible the problems linked to equality between girls and boys is thus eligible for the label.

Issues related to the religion or belief of students are addressed in many general strategic policy frameworks in the sense that the frameworks aim to combat discrimination on that ground. Denmark <sup>(151)</sup>, Germany (see the country example below), Spain <sup>(152)</sup>, Italy <sup>(153)</sup>, Latvia <sup>(154)</sup>, Austria <sup>(155)</sup>, Romania (see the country example below) and Sweden <sup>(156)</sup> also reported specific legislation focusing on this topic, or more precisely on **combating antisemitism** in education. In May 2021, the Government of Romania adopted the first national strategy for preventing and combating antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalisation and hate speech (covering 2021–2023), and a related action plan <sup>(157)</sup>. A similar strategic document with a specific focus on the area of school education was adopted, also in 2021, in Germany (see the country example below).

**In Germany, the 2021 joint recommendation of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the Joint Federal and State Commission to fight antisemitism and protect Jewish life and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education**

and Cultural Affairs on dealing with antisemitism in schools <sup>(158)</sup> was adopted. It provides orientation for dealing with different forms of antisemitism, describes their effects and highlights prevention and intervention measures. It is directed at classroom teachers and other educators at schools of all kinds and levels, who teach any subject, and at school directors, teacher training institutions and the relevant public institutions.

The recommendation underlines the importance of educational activities in schools that are based on values derived from the fundamental rights in basic law and from human rights that centre on human dignity. This is the position from which antisemitism must be countered. The signatories to the recommendation propose to fight antisemitism and protect Jewish life, in particular by ensuring that:

- antisemitic incidents in the school environment are identified as such, investigated and combated;
- contemporary Jewish life is discussed at schools and encounters with Jewish people are made possible;
- knowledge of antisemitism, Jewish life and history and the present-day Jewish community is imparted more thoroughly in teacher training and further training programmes are developed;
- the teacher training commission considers expanding the requirement for teacher education accordingly;
- a pilot project on antisemitism is developed as a topic in teacher training at universities;
- a joint specialist conference on implementing the recommendation is organised.

### Combating discrimination against LGBTIQ+

students also features as an objective in some of the broader policy frameworks presented above; however, school-related legislation, strategies or action plans specifically targeting this group are reported in only a minority of European education systems. For example, in Malta, a trans, gender variant and intersex students in schools policy <sup>(159)</sup> was introduced in 2015. France is taking a range of actions in the area of education to combat homophobia and transphobia <sup>(160)</sup>, including the provision of free telephone hotlines for

<sup>(151)</sup> The 2022 action plan against anti-Semitism (<https://www.justitsministeriet.dk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Antisemitism-action-plan-pdf.pdf>).

<sup>(152)</sup> Organic Law 2/2006, of 3 May, on education, as amended by Organic Law 3/2020, of 29 December (<https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2006-7899#dacuadragesimaprimer>).

<sup>(153)</sup> The 2021 guidelines on combating antisemitism in school (<https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/6740601/Linee+guida+antisemitismo.pdf/bd6ce7ed-8965-212f-2492-eb416986460d?version=1.0&t=1642174957136>).

<sup>(154)</sup> The 2023 plan to reduce racism and antisemitism (<https://www.vestnesis.lv/doc/2023/74.2>).

<sup>(155)</sup> The 2021 national strategy against antisemitism ([https://www.parlament.gov.at/dokument/XXVII/III/256/imfname\\_886249.pdf](https://www.parlament.gov.at/dokument/XXVII/III/256/imfname_886249.pdf)).

<sup>(156)</sup> Action programme against anti-Semitism (<https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/685563289376426fa680ae3ee95c4305/atgardsprogram-mot-antisemitism.pdf>).

<sup>(157)</sup> See <https://www.euractiv.ro/documente/ADB/ANEXA-1-4.pdf>.

<sup>(158)</sup> See [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2021/2021\\_06\\_10-Gemeinsame-Empfehlung-Antisemitismus-engl.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2021/2021_06_10-Gemeinsame-Empfehlung-Antisemitismus-engl.pdf).

<sup>(159)</sup> See <https://educationservices.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Policy%20Documents/Trans,%20Gender%20Variant%20and%20Intersex%20Students%20in%20Schools%20Policy.pdf>.

<sup>(160)</sup> See <https://www.education.gouv.fr/contre-l-homophobie-et-la-transphobie-l-ecole-40706#:~:text=Flyer%20LGBT%20lyc%C3%A9e,Les%20associations%20partenaires%20pour%20lutter%20contre%20l%20homophobie,%C3%A9cole%20et%20d%20%C3%A9tablissement>.

students and educational professionals, campaigns and information, and pedagogical resources. In Italy, the first national LGBT+ strategy (2022–2025) (see the country example below) has been adopted, in alignment with the 2020–2025 European LGBTIQ equality strategy. In Portugal, a practical guide<sup>(161)</sup> was produced in 2023 by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality in collaboration with the Ministry of Education; it reinforces the importance of an inclusive culture in schools and aims to enable teaching and non-teaching staff to respond to situations of violence, discrimination and prejudice, and, in particular, to situations of homophobia or transphobia.

The **Italian 2022–2025 national LGBT+ strategy**<sup>(162)</sup> has been developed in line with international conventions and the EU's and Italy's constitutional provisions. It constitutes an instrument for strengthening the protection of the rights of LGBT+ people and promoting the equal treatment, non-discrimination and full inclusion of all people. The strategy is the result of a consultation process with civil society and state institutions, and it provides the basis for the planning of strategic objectives and concrete actions defined by priority areas, in accordance with a mainstreaming approach. The document represents the commitment of the country to ensure full equality for all LGBT+ people, and to bring about cultural change by combating stereotypes and prejudices.

The priority intervention areas covered by the strategy are work and welfare, safety, health, education/training/sports, culture/communication/media and database/monitoring/evaluation. In the area of education/training/sports, the strategy proposes the following main objectives:

- prevent and fight discrimination of young LGBT+ people in schools at all levels, through educational content promoting respect for differences; training paths for school leaders, teachers and educational support staff; and dissemination of good practices;
- provide opportunities, tools and activities targeting young people to convey information related to the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, to inform them and raise their awareness of LGBT+ issues and to prevent all discrimination and incidents of gender-based violence;
- prevent and fight discrimination in the field of sport through training and awareness-raising initiatives.

### 3.3. Summary

National/top-level legislation, strategies and action plans can contribute to removing existing barriers to education and to promoting equality and inclusion in schools on a systemic level. All European education systems report that they have such policy frameworks currently in force. They include broader policy frameworks aiming to improve the education system and learning outcomes, prevent discrimination and promote inclusive education, on the one hand, and those that are specifically focused on certain groups of students who are disadvantaged and/or at risk of discrimination, on the other hand. Many of these policy frameworks have been introduced in recent years, and they are sometimes based on related EU policy initiatives (e.g. the EU anti-racism action plan or the EU LGBTIQ equality strategy).

Most education systems report existing top-level legislation, strategies and action plans that have the broad main aim of improving the education system as a whole (through, inter alia, measures promoting inclusive education, equal access and support to the learners), followed by policy frameworks aiming to prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunities (including in the area of education), and those aiming to improve students' learning outcomes and/or reduce ELET. Less frequently reported are top-level legislation, strategies and action plans focusing specifically on the promotion of inclusive education.

Among the targeted strategic policy frameworks, the most widely reported ones aim to promote the participation and inclusion of Roma students. These are closely followed by top-level legislation, strategies and action plans promoting the inclusion of, and support to, students with special educational needs or disabilities. Around half of the education systems report policy frameworks focusing on the inclusion of migrant and/or refugee students, and strategic policy frameworks aiming to promote gender equality are reported in around one third of the education systems. Only a minority of education systems reported having policy frameworks that aim to combat antisemitism or the discrimination of LGBTIQ+ students. However, these issues are often addressed within the scope of broader legal frameworks.

The current analysis did not investigate the implementation or impact of the existing policy frameworks. However, their existence points to the commitment of European education systems to address certain challenges and barriers faced by learners, teachers and schools. The challenges and barriers can be overcome if adequate resources are available, and monitoring and evaluation of the results are ensured.

<sup>(161)</sup> See [https://www.cig.gov.pt/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/IDAHOT-Orientac%CC%A7o%CC%83es\\_Para-uma-Escola-Inclusiva\\_web.pdf](https://www.cig.gov.pt/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/IDAHOT-Orientac%CC%A7o%CC%83es_Para-uma-Escola-Inclusiva_web.pdf).

<sup>(162)</sup> See <https://unari.it/portale/web/guest/strategia-nazionale-lgbt-2022-2025>.

## Chapter 4: Promoting access to and participation in schools

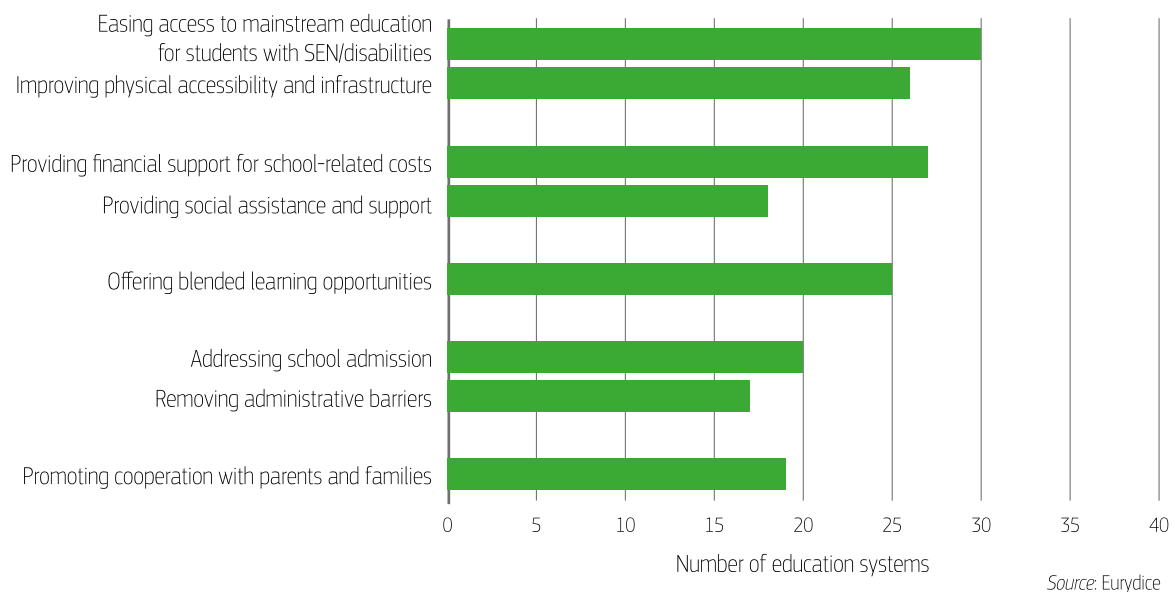
Access to and participation in school education is a universal right (and duty), enshrined in national and international laws. Nevertheless, some learners face challenges in benefiting from this right. This can be due to education systems and structures having limited ability, flexibility and/or resources to meet learners' different needs (see also Chapter 1), which points to a need for structural changes.

This chapter analyses some of the main top-level policies and measures of European education systems aiming to promote access to and participation in mainstream school education of those learners who are more likely to face barriers. These initiatives are captured in Figure 4.1. They are grouped thematically into five policy areas: easing access to mainstream

education for learners with special educational needs and improving physical accessibility; financial and social support; blended learning opportunities; addressing and removing administrative barriers; and cooperation with parents.

The figure and analysis below focus on policies and measures that target those learners who face specific barriers to access and participation, rather than the more general legislation stipulating universal and equal access to mainstream education. It shows that students with special educational needs or disabilities, those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, and migrant, refugee and ethnic minority students are the most frequently targeted groups of learners.

**Figure 4.1: Targeted top-level policies and measures promoting learners' school access and participation, 2022/2023**



### Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting one or more of the listed policies and measures promoting school access and participation of learners who are more likely to face barriers (in descending order).

The policies are grouped into broader thematic areas.

A country-specific overview can be found in the annex (Table 4.1A).

#### 4.1. Easing access to mainstream education for students with special educational needs or disabilities

The most widely reported policies to promote access to and participation in mainstream education relate to increasing access for students with special educational needs or disabilities, including improvements in physical accessibility, infrastructure and assistive technology. Indeed, the right to education for every child includes children with disabilities, as clearly stated in Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities <sup>(163)</sup>. Therefore, at the policy level, there has been a clear push to increase inclusiveness in mainstream education and to reduce the number of students in special schools <sup>(164)</sup>. This report confirms this political commitment, showing that many education systems have set as a rule that mainstream education should be the first option for students with special educational needs. However, data from the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE) show large differences between countries. Across the ones with available data for the 2019/2020 school year, the enrolment rate in mainstream education for learners with an official decision of special educational needs ranges at primary level from 43.07 % to 99.05 %; at lower secondary level from 22.55 % to 100.00 %; and at upper secondary level from 0.74 % to 100.00 % <sup>(165)</sup>.

Discriminatory practices may, therefore, still persist, so more decisive action may be required to ensure that mainstream schools have the necessary means and resources to enable students with special educational needs to participate, and to adequately support such students. Organisations such as Inclusion Europe confirm that most countries are challenged by implementing the ambition of inclusive education as long as it is not adequately financed, and special schools exist <sup>(166)</sup>.

Similarly, the 2021 Global education monitoring report for central and eastern Europe highlights that, despite legislation to prevent segregation, barriers remain (UNESCO, 2021a). Learners with special educational needs or disabilities, but also other groups of disadvantaged students, might find themselves excluded from mainstream education when admission depends on selection procedures such as medical and/

or psychological screening. Although such assessments may help to determine necessary support measures, they can also become a barrier to inclusion.

To counter any discriminatory practices and promote access to and participation in mainstream education for all students, some education systems have implemented policies determining that all learners, regardless of any special educational needs or disabilities, should be assigned to their local mainstream school (see the country examples below).

**In Italy**, 100 % of students with special educational needs are in mainstream education. The process of inclusion in mainstream education of learners with a disability started in 1977 with Law 517 <sup>(167)</sup>, which abolished differential classes and established the principle of inclusion for all learners with disabilities in primary and secondary schools, aged 6–14 years. Subsequent regulations/legislations have broadened the principle to include all students at all levels of education. Law 517 also introduces the theme of individualised educational planning as an indispensable tool to ‘facilitate the implementation of the right to education and the promotion of the full formation of the personality of students, in particular of those with disabilities’. Support activities are guaranteed through the assignment of specialised class teachers, called support teachers (*insegnanti di sostegno*). Local authorities are responsible for providing students with educational assistants who help the learners develop their autonomy and facilitate communication and participation in class.

**In Lithuania**, upon adoption of the amendments of the law on education <sup>(168)</sup>, all general education schools will have to accept all students without any exceptions. Until 1 September 2024, a school that is unable, for objective reasons, to guarantee a learner the psychological, special pedagogical or social pedagogical assistance, has to propose another school. It means that a school has the right to refuse to admit a learner by claiming that the school is not adjusted to the learner’s needs. The amendments of the law on education will abolish this discriminatory provision and, as of 1 September 2024, schools must ensure access to education for students with special educational needs by providing psychological, special pedagogical or social pedagogical assistance, social, health-care and other services, educational technical support tools at school, and special teaching tools, and by adapting the educational environment (physical, informational).

<sup>(163)</sup> See <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-24-education.html>.

<sup>(164)</sup> See, for example, the Council recommendation of 28 November 2022 on pathways to school success and replacing the Council recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving (text with EEA relevance) (2022/C 469/01).

<sup>(165)</sup> See <https://www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/EASIE-2019-2020-cross-country-report>

<sup>(166)</sup> See [https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/IE\\_CSN\\_Education\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/IE_CSN_Education_Report_Final.pdf).

<sup>(167)</sup> See <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1977/08/18/077U0517/sg>.

<sup>(168)</sup> See <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/55d2363085eb11eaa51db668f0092944?positionInSearchResults=10&searchModelUUID=131729c5-4dcb-4943-8913-e9eb601a45ef>.

Some education systems report having put in place measures to support mainstream schools in providing quality teaching and learning for students with special educational needs, for example by tapping into the experience of special education schools (e.g. in the German-speaking Community of Belgium (see the example below) and Albania) or by allocating more resources, including teaching assistants (e.g. in Malta and Bosnia and Herzegovina), or providing targeted learning support (e.g. in Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Portugal and Slovenia) (see also Chapter 6, Section 6.2, and Chapter 7, Section 7.3). Other education systems regulate how many students with special educational needs can be taught in a mainstream class (e.g. in Bulgaria), stipulate smaller class sizes (e.g. in Estonia and Hungary) or aim to increase the number of students with special educational needs in mainstream classes, while providing them with support from specialists (e.g. in the French Community of Belgium).

In 2009, the **German-speaking Community of Belgium** merged its special schools and formed the Centre for Special Needs Pedagogy (*Zentrum für Förderpädagogik* (ZFP)), whose mission is to assist mainstream schools in their work towards more inclusive education settings<sup>(169)</sup>. These efforts were strengthened in 2014, when the system's psycho-medical-social centres (PMS), the school health centres and the child and family services were merged into a single structure, Kaleido Ostbelgien.

An important feature of the German-speaking Community's approach to special educational needs is that it no longer allows for the classification of students by types of disorder, disability or impairment. Instead, the system focuses on each student's pedagogical needs, as determined through observations and pedagogical assumptions. The German-speaking Community of Belgium has developed a structured support system for students with special educational needs.

The ZFP and the Pater Damian Special School (*Pater-Damian-Förderschule*) organise the integration of students into mainstream schools, managing 'integration projects' throughout the German-speaking Community, which comprises about 60 mainstream schools. To assist with integration projects and support students with special educational needs, teachers are seconded from the special schools to mainstream schools.

This example of the German-speaking Community of Belgium shows that one way to review selection procedures and make them less discriminatory is to screen students based on educational criteria, that is, the educational needs that arise from a certain condition, and not based on the medical criteria classifying and labelling students by impairment, disability, etc.

Finally, the decision to admit a student with special educational needs to mainstream education or to special education/classes generally requires the informed consent of the parents/guardians (e.g. in Czechia) and may be taken upon recommendation by a group of stakeholders covering different areas of expertise and forming interdisciplinary boards (e.g. in Slovakia). The procedure can also include strong safeguards, including the possibility of appealing against the decision, as is the case in the following country examples.

In **Luxembourg**, according to the amended law on the organisation of elementary education, parents can refer their child to the Regional Commission for School Inclusion (*Commission d'inclusion scolaire* (CIS)). For each child, and subject to the parents' approval, the CIS draws up a diagnosis of a child's needs and proposes an individual support plan. This document is prepared by the class teacher in cooperation with the parents. It suggests an adapted type of schooling in an institution of mainstream education or special education and may include additional support measures<sup>(170)</sup>.

Regulations in **Poland**<sup>(171)</sup> stipulate that, in the case of issuing an opinion or a decision on special educational needs concerning learners belonging to national and ethnic minorities and communities speaking a regional language, and children and learners who do not speak Polish or who speak it at a level insufficient to benefit from education, their linguistic and cultural differences should be taken into account, to avoid considering learners who need linguistic support as having special educational needs. These examinations should use diagnostic tools adapted to the linguistic abilities of these children and learners, including non-verbal and culturally unencumbered tests.

In **Slovenia**, the National Education Institute (ZRSŠ) is the deciding authority for the placement of children with special needs in appropriate education programmes for students with special educational needs (five SEN education

<sup>(169)</sup> See <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/5922caaf-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/5922caaf-en#section-d1e14359>.

<sup>(170)</sup> See <https://men.public.lu/en/themes-transversaux/elevés-besoins-spezifiques/glossaire.html>.

<sup>(171)</sup> See <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20170001743>.

programmes). According to the placement of children with special needs act<sup>(172)</sup> and the act regulating the integrated early treatment of preschool children with special needs<sup>(173)</sup>, parents submit a request for placement proceedings and the ZRSŠ issues a decision on placement based on the individual plan and/or recommendations of the multidisciplinary team. The multidisciplinary team includes paediatric specialists, nurses, physiotherapists, work therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, special and rehabilitation education specialists, social workers and/or other necessary specialists, and parents.

In the case of children with special educational needs who are identified later, the parents submit a written request for placement. At the ZRSŠ, depending on the nature of the impairment, a three-member placement committee is appointed formed of special pedagogues, psychologists, specialists in paediatrics or child psychiatry or specialists in school medicine, and, as a rule, the specialist who treats the child with regard to his or her special needs. The placement committee gives a professional opinion and a recommendation for the education programme or determines that the placement is not necessary. An appeal against the decision is possible. The minister responsible for education decides in an appeal case.

## 4.2. Improving physical accessibility and infrastructure

Promoting the inclusion of learners with special educational needs or disabilities through better accessibility of school facilities is among the common priorities and objectives set by the EU Member States (European Commission, 2022a). Policies related to physical accessibility and adapted infrastructure are also reported by many of the European education systems. Generally, this means that the provision of accessible architecture for schools (and other public buildings) is regulated by law. The question that follows is how better accessibility is put into practice and funded when new buildings are planned and/or existing school buildings are not fulfilling these requirements and therefore need to be adapted.

In some education systems, investments to work towards a better accessibility of schools is covered by national funding and supplemented by European funding, such as the European Regional Development Fund (e.g. in Czechia, Croatia and Poland). The adaptation and adjustment of infrastructure is gradual; therefore, some education systems try to define this

in time. In the Netherlands, for example, the equal treatment on grounds of disability or chronic illness act states that effective adjustments to the buildings must be made within a reasonable period of time<sup>(174)</sup>.

Costs and responsibilities might also be shared between schools and the national level, with the schools addressing the more basic access elements, such as touch strips, toilets, signs and parking, and the state covering the more costly adjustments (e.g. platforms or lifts) (e.g. in Montenegro). Another common approach in this area is the provision of reasonable accommodations, not necessarily affecting the school building as such, but enabling, for example, the rearrangement of the classrooms (e.g. in Luxembourg). The Norwegian equality and anti-discrimination act illustrates another factor related to decisions about infrastructure adaptations, namely the idea of 'disproportionate burden on the undertaking', that is, weighing different elements in the assessment of a possible design or adaptation (see the country example below).

The **Norwegian** equality and anti-discrimination act<sup>(175)</sup> states that public undertakings and private undertakings focused on the general public have a duty to ensure that their general functions have a universal design. 'Universal design' means designing, or accommodating physical conditions, so that the general functions of the undertaking can be used by as many people as possible, regardless of disability.

The duty does not apply to design or accommodation that imposes a disproportionate burden on the undertaking. In the assessment, particular weight shall be given to:

- a. the effect of dismantling barriers for persons with disabilities;
- b. whether the general functions of the undertaking are of a public nature;
- c. the costs associated with accommodation;
- d. the undertaking's resources;
- e. safety considerations;
- f. cultural heritage considerations.

The following examples show that current policies are often wider in their definitions of accessibility and go beyond the physical dimension in order to improve access to, and learning experiences in, schools for learners with special educational needs.

<sup>(174)</sup> See <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/12/18/rapport-toelatingsbeleid-toegankelijkheid> and <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0014915/2020-01-01>.

<sup>(175)</sup> See <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/2017-06-16-51>.

<sup>(172)</sup> See <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO5896>.

<sup>(173)</sup> See <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO7681>.

**Poland** is currently implementing the ‘accessible school model’ project as part of the government’s ‘accessibility plus’ programme. The aim of the project is to develop a school model that will set standards in the area of accessibility, in terms of the architectural, technical, educational and social dimensions, and in the areas of school organisation and procedures; it will be tested in 97 schools across Poland. The project is being implemented between 2019 and 2023 with the support of the EU programme knowledge education development <sup>(176)</sup>.

**Sweden** strengthened its discrimination act <sup>(177)</sup> on 1 January 2015. Since then, it classifies lack of accessibility in all forms of school as discrimination. The regulations include teaching and premises. Accessible education means that the learning environments, from pedagogical, physical and social perspectives, are accessible and adapted to the different needs and conditions of all students. The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools is tasked with ensuring that children, young people and adults – regardless of functional ability – have adequate conditions to fulfil their educational goals. This is done through special needs support, education in special needs schools, accessible teaching materials and government funding. In addition, there is the Swedish Agency for Participation, which is an expert agency that promotes work related to the implementation of disability policy. The agency develops and spreads information about obstacles to participation and supports public sector bodies (including schools).

Finally, some education systems refer to the funding and use of assistive technologies as another form of adjustment to the learning environment to support students with certain impairments (e.g. in Czechia, Denmark, Cyprus, Switzerland, Norway and Montenegro).

The **Croatian Academic and Research Network (CARNET)** is leading the project ‘Enhanced tools for creating equal opportunities in education for pupils with disabilities’ (ATTEND), which aims to equip 34 educational institutions in Croatia with assistive technology in order to create the necessary conditions for children with developmental disabilities to have equal educational opportunities and be successfully included in society <sup>(178)</sup>.

<sup>(176)</sup> See <https://www.gov.pl/web/fundusze-regiony/startuje-projekt-dostepna-szkola> and available School – Rzeszów Regional Development Agency S. A. (<https://rarr.rzeszow.pl/projekty/projekt-dostepna-szkola>).

<sup>(177)</sup> See [https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/diskrimineringslag-2008567\\_sfs-2008-567](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/diskrimineringslag-2008567_sfs-2008-567).

<sup>(178)</sup> See <https://www.carnet.hr/projekt/attend>.

In **Italy**, the law of 30 December 2020 <sup>(179)</sup> determines that, ‘In order to achieve the scholastic inclusion of learners with disabilities, for each of the school years 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024, 10 million euros are allocated for the purchase and maintenance of technical equipment and teaching aids [...], and for the acquisition of services necessary for their best use, intended for educational institutions that welcome learners with certified disabilities.’

### 4.3. Providing financial support for school-related costs

Compulsory education in public schools is generally provided free of charge everywhere in Europe; however, different types of school-related costs occur. Therefore, among the policies to promote access and participation of all learners, providing financial support for certain school-related costs is reported by more than half of the European education systems. This often involves financial support for textbooks and learning materials. Many education systems also provide transport free of charge or at a subsidised fare. Some also provide free or subsidised meals.

In many education systems, financial support for school-related costs targets certain groups of learners: learners with special educational needs or disabilities (e.g. in Italy, for transport; in Cyprus, for transport and special individual equipment; in Poland, for transport and learning materials; in Montenegro, for textbooks), learners from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background (e.g. in Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Hungary, Portugal and Slovenia) and refugee and migrant students (e.g. in Portugal and Türkiye for recent immigrants, mostly Ukrainians and Syrians, respectively).

In **Czechia**, for example, the school head can reduce or waive the fees for meals, mainly in the case of refugee and other migrant students and for those in material need. In such cases, the costs can be covered within the yearly programme of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (via NGOs) or the school lunches programme, administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and co-financed by the FAED, which was in place until July 2023 (via regions). In addition, the fees in after-school centres and clubs can be reduced or waived when a student or parent is entitled to recurring poverty benefits, increased care allowances (for persons who are ill or with disabilities) or foster care benefits <sup>(180)</sup>.

<sup>(179)</sup> See <https://www.normattiva.it/eli/stato/LEGGE/2020/12/30/178/CONSOLIDATED/20210507>.

<sup>(180)</sup> See <https://www.mpsv.cz/web/cz/vyhlasene-vyzvy>.

In **Germany**, to ensure that learners have access to all learning materials regardless of their economic and social situations, most *Länder* have regulations on the provision of financial assistance for learners to purchase learning materials, or on their provision free of charge. This provision is, in part, staggered in accordance with parents' income and number of children. Under these regulations, students either are exempt from the costs or pay only part of the costs. The funds are provided either by the *Schulträger* (the local authority responsible for establishing and maintaining the schools) or by the specific *Land* <sup>(181)</sup>.

In **Greece**, the school meals programme <sup>(182)</sup> has been expanded to assist a greater number of schools and students. Undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the school meals programme aims to address the nutritional needs of students belonging to particularly vulnerable social groups and to mitigate early school leaving and related phenomena. Currently, this programme is implemented in over 1 600 school with over 224 000 students.

In **France**, the implementation of free breakfasts <sup>(183)</sup> at school and the reduction of school canteen costs, *cantine à 1 euro*, in accordance with parents' income, are part of a social response to facilitate schooling. Similarly, the school allowance depends on the level of income <sup>(184)</sup>.

In **Lithuania**, the law on education <sup>(185)</sup> describes that the accessibility of education to socially excluded children from poor families, children of refugees, children not attending school, and children of unemployed persons, persons who have been released from prison, persons undergoing treatment for alcohol and drug addiction and persons failing to adapt to society shall be ensured by providing them with financial support, social services and educational assistance.

In the case of targeted financial support for learners with special educational needs, EASNIE points to the fact that linking funding to diagnosis/labelled

impairments bears the risk that schools are tempted to overidentify disabilities and special educational needs to receive extra funds. EASNIE therefore recommends funding schools with a general fund based on the totality of educational needs (EASNIE, 2014, 2016).

Specific support can also be necessary for learners in rural and remote areas. One third of the education systems mention measures to ease access to schools for these learners and to mitigate the effect of a reduced educational offer in remote areas. Often the support is related to transport, but it can also concern the use of digital technologies.

In **Spain**, the educational administrations pay special attention to educational centres in rural areas, and the need to promote the participation of students from rural areas beyond basic education. For this purpose, the necessary means and organisational systems are provided to meet the particular needs of rural schools and guarantee equal opportunities, in particular through the following:

- for children in rural areas, school transport services are provided free of charge and, when appropriate, meals and boarding school are provided free of charge;
- reasonable adjustments will be made to the criteria for the organisation of optional secondary education subjects in centres that, due to their size, could see them being restricted;
- the educational administrations facilitate the availability of sufficient human resources in rural areas and encourage specific training for teachers in rural areas, favouring their connection and identification with the educational projects of the centre;
- the planning of schooling in rural areas must have sufficient economic resources for the maintenance of the network of rural centres; free transport and meals for students who require it; and the necessary devices, computers, telecommunication networks and internet access <sup>(186)</sup>.

In **Italy**, many areas, in particular small islands and mountain areas, suffer from a geographical disadvantage. Schools in these areas sometimes have very few students and organise mixed-age classes. In these educational contexts, schools are encouraged to use digital technologies for didactic purposes (e.g. online lessons) and to form networks with other schools to overcome the risk of isolation <sup>(187)</sup>.

<sup>(181)</sup> See, for example, [https://www.lexsoft.de/cgi-bin/lexsoft/justizportal\\_nrw.cgi?xid=492252,97](https://www.lexsoft.de/cgi-bin/lexsoft/justizportal_nrw.cgi?xid=492252,97).

<sup>(182)</sup> See [https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek\\_pdf=20220205151](https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=20220205151).

<sup>(183)</sup> See <https://www.education.gouv.fr/des-petits-dejeuners-dans-les-ecoles-pour-favoriser-l-egalite-des-chances-1061>.

<sup>(184)</sup> See <https://www.asp-public.fr/aides/cantine-a-1-euro#:~:text=Pour%20les%20collectivites%20C3%A9s%20mettant%20en,%20C3%A9gal%20C3%A0%201000%E2%82%AC> and <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A15056#:~:text=376%20C98%20E2%82%AC%20avant%20revalorisation,entre%2015%20et%2018%20ans>.

<sup>(185)</sup> See <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/t/TAD/df672e20b93311e5be9bf78e07ed6470>.

<sup>(186)</sup> See <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2006-7899#a82>.

<sup>(187)</sup> See <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2009/07/02/009G0089/sg>.



In Sweden, distance learning, defined as interactive teaching conducted with information and communication technology, whereby students and teachers are separated in space but not in time, is, for example, used to the benefit of learners in rural areas. This type of distance learning is offered when there is no available teacher in the area, or if the student base is so limited that regular teaching within the school unit leads to significant organisational or financial difficulties for the principal<sup>(188)</sup>.

Funding sources can be diverse, as they relate not only to education, but also to social welfare, labour, inclusion, etc. Moreover, the sources can be local/ regional (e.g. in Iceland, the Equalisation Fund (*Joefnunarjodur*))<sup>(189)</sup>, national or European (e.g. in Latvia, the ESF project ‘support for reducing early school leaving’<sup>(190)</sup>; in Romania, the ‘operational programme helping disadvantaged persons’<sup>(191)</sup>). In the case of European project-based funds, the challenge is to ensure continuity after the project ends.

#### 4.4. Providing social assistance and support

Social assistance and support are other means to promote equal access and participation of all learners in schools, reported by over one third of all education systems. This support can be financial or in kind, for example in the form of additional support staff. Indeed, it is common for schools to provide medical, psychological and/or social support through dedicated staff in schools, or guidance and counselling through services working in schools or in collaboration with schools (see also Chapter 6, Section 6.1). Of course, social assistance and support can go well beyond interventions in schools and involve cooperation with many other social services.

With the promotion of diversity and inclusion being a clear policy priority at the EU level, national measures for social support in schools can be co-funded by European funds, such as the ESF+ and NextGenerationEU/Recovery and Resilience Facility (e.g. in Czechia). At the national level, this is also related to social welfare and includes the possibility of financial aid in the form of scholarships and school allowances for students from low-income families (e.g. in France and Poland).

The following examples highlight some of the policies and measures on social assistance and support targeting learners who are more likely to face barriers, that is, mainly students from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background, students with educational disadvantages, ethnic minority students and migrant students. Overall, such initiatives have been reported by over one third of the European education systems.

In Czechia, the legislation on guidance and counselling specifically mentions the social inclusion of learners from different cultural backgrounds and different living conditions in the context of measures to prevent all forms of risky behaviour, but also for successful completion of education. In the national recovery programme, another target group is socially disadvantaged students<sup>(192)</sup>. A total of 400 schools with a higher proportion of socially disadvantaged students have been chosen by the ministry. The aim is to increase the school success of these students, their motivation to learn and their overall well-being. In addition to the standard educational staff, other positions dealing with social support can be funded, such as a school social pedagogue, a teaching assistant for socially disadvantaged students, an inclusion coordinator and an adaptation coordinator or leisure activities worker; other relevant measures can also be funded, such as case management (promoting multidisciplinary support) or breakfast clubs.

In Greece, Roma students are specifically targeted by supportive interventions to reinforce access and reduce the rate of early school leaving. The interventions have a holistic approach addressing the whole community<sup>(193)</sup>.

In Spain, one of the territorial cooperation programmes (*Unidades de acompañamiento y orientación personal y familiar del alumnado educativamente vulnerable*) targets students in situations of educational vulnerability and their families<sup>(194)</sup>. This programme is considered an innovative measure with a specific function: to accompany the most vulnerable students in their educational paths to prevent school failure and promote their learning and school success, in collaboration with other professionals.

<sup>(188)</sup> See <https://www.skolverket.se/regler-och-ansvar/ansvar-i-skolfragor/fjarrundervisning>.

<sup>(189)</sup> See <https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/iceland/financing-of-inclusive-education-systems>.

<sup>(190)</sup> See [https://www.ikvd.gov.lv/en/projects/esf-project-no-834016i001-support-reduction-early-school-leaving-pumpurs?utm\\_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bing.com%2F](https://www.ikvd.gov.lv/en/projects/esf-project-no-834016i001-support-reduction-early-school-leaving-pumpurs?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bing.com%2F).

<sup>(191)</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/in-your-country/programmes/2014-2020/ro/2014ro05m9op001\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/in-your-country/programmes/2014-2020/ro/2014ro05m9op001_en).

<sup>(192)</sup> See <https://www.edu.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Katalog-nastroju-prikklady.pdf>.

<sup>(193)</sup> See <http://www.iep.edu.gr/el/europaika-se-ekseliksi/inclusive-schools-for-roma>.

<sup>(194)</sup> See <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/mc/sgctie/cooperacion-territorial/programas-cooperacion/uao.html>.

In **Portugal**, the TEIP 3 programme <sup>(195)</sup> is designed exclusively for schools in underprivileged areas, with high rates of early school leavers. Through this programme, school clusters in underprivileged areas can create multidisciplinary teams – psychologists, social workers and cultural mediators, among others – to intervene in school settings. Moreover, school social support is a national measure for all schools that aims to prevent social exclusion and school drop-out among students from disadvantaged families, which might include families from ethnic minorities (especially Roma), students from non-Portuguese-speaking migrant families, Portuguese-speaking people of African descent and families with low income.

Since 2019, **Luxembourg** has opted to offer children suffering from long-term or chronic illnesses the possibility to follow their classes from their tablet via telepresence robotics, or so-called avatars. Having started as a local pilot project initiated by a hospital teacher, the idea has risen to a national offer being monitored by the *Commission nationale d'inclusion* – the National Inclusion Commission. Thanks to their avatars, children who are unable to physically attend their classes for a long period due to medical reasons can now follow their lessons even if isolated at home, during their treatment in a hospital abroad or between their appointments for physical rehabilitation. All they need is a working Wi-Fi network at both ends of the line and a doctor testifying that the student requires a minimum of 6 weeks of rehabilitation before physically going back to class.

#### 4.5. Offering blended learning opportunities

In 2021, EU education ministers adopted the Council recommendation on blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education <sup>(196)</sup>. Blended learning can be understood as a blend of school site and other physical learning environments, on-site and digital, or as a blend of different digital and non-digital tools. By promoting inclusive access, blended learning is meant to make education more responsive and resilient.

The whole area has gained importance through the COVID-19 pandemic and the forced school closures, but also more recently with the arrival of learners from Ukraine in EU Member States. A recent study confirms a changed situation since COVID-19, as many European countries have developed targeted digital inclusion strategies for vulnerable groups to improve access to digital devices and the internet in vulnerable regional and rural areas, to increase participation in distance learning and the take-up of related resources, and to focus on supporting students with special educational needs or disabilities (European Commission, 2021).

Across Europe, more than half of the education systems report policies related to offering blended learning opportunities to promote access to education for all learners. Many of them highlight policies on the use of blended learning with the help of digital tools to allow students who have to stay at home, in hospital or in social establishments to continue education remotely (e.g. in Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta and Portugal).

Some education systems report policies on the provision of electronic educational resources for other target groups, such as migrant students and students with learning disabilities (e.g. in Estonia) or all learners who need it (e.g. in Greece). To allow learners from Ukraine to continue their schooling, many European education systems have offered these learners, besides measures promoting their integration in local schools, the possibility to study in accordance with the Ukrainian online school (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2022a).

#### 4.6. Addressing school admission and removing administrative barriers

Across Europe, general school admission policies stipulate equal and universal access and the prohibition of discrimination, in particular segregation. However, in practice, their design and particular mechanisms can still lead to inequalities. School admission and school choice policies and their effects on equity have been analysed in depth in the Eurydice report on equity in school education (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020). Some of the report's conclusions are that the differentiation between school types in school choice and admission policies contribute to lower equity levels. A concentration of students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds in some schools, for example, may be the result of residential segregation, or the unintended result of school policies, such as school choice, admissions or tracking.

It is common that admission policies define catchment areas to ensure that all learners enrol in their local school, and thus prevent segregation. However, education authorities may also decide to readjust these catchment areas in the case of socioeconomic

<sup>(195)</sup> See <https://www.dge.mec.pt/teip>.

<sup>(196)</sup> Council of the European Union, Council recommendation of 29 November 2021 on blended learning approaches for high-quality and inclusive primary and secondary education (OJ C 504/21, 29.11.2021, p. 21).

imbalances in neighbourhoods (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020). Hungary and Finland, for example, report that the catchment areas (or school admission districts) can be modified considering the ratio of socially disadvantaged students, with the aim of changing the school composition and making it more socially diverse.

Other specific and targeted admission policies aiming to tackle segregation and increase diversity are reported in around half of the European education systems. They relate to creating more flexibility in admissions, targeting vulnerable groups and/or allowing for priority admissions for certain learners. This is the case in Croatia, for example, where students with developmental difficulties have certain advantages enabling them to enrol in the educational programme of their choice. In Latvia, priority admission is granted to orphan children. In Romania, some places in the ninth grade of secondary education are reserved for Roma students. In Portugal, students with special needs and students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds are given priority in the admission process <sup>(197)</sup>.

More than one third of the education systems report measures to reduce or remove administrative barriers to school admission. For example, in some cases, school admission is ensured regardless of the resident status of migrant and refugee children (e.g. in Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Poland and Portugal), or the duration and conditions of stay of children from itinerant families and travellers (e.g. in France). Students coming from abroad can also be exempted from entrance examinations in the language of schooling (e.g. in Czechia, in the case of admission to multi-year general secondary schools); they can receive support for registration, reception orientation and guidance at school (e.g. in Luxembourg, Malta and Switzerland), and interpretation can be provided in schools for communication with parents (e.g. in Luxembourg and Liechtenstein). Under the temporary protection directive <sup>(198)</sup>, Ukrainian children have been granted immediate access to local schools and specific support (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2022a).

The following country examples illustrate some further admission policies aiming to promote diversity and a balance in the school population, in terms of socioeconomic background, origin, educational needs, etc., and thus to prevent segregation and other forms of discrimination.

The decree for the first enrolment in secondary school <sup>(199)</sup> in the **French Community of Belgium** has among its objectives to fight against discriminatory mechanisms by promoting social, cultural and academic diversity. This entails, first, accompanying the enrolment with clear and accessible information and, second, giving priority to students coming from disadvantaged schools or neighbourhoods.

In **Bulgaria**, the admission policies stipulate that children from different ethnic backgrounds (especially Roma) of the same age shall not be separated into different groups or classes based on their ethnic background <sup>(200)</sup>. This shall be accompanied by effective interaction between the school and the family, with a focus on parents from vulnerable groups, including Roma.

The school evaluation criteria of the **Czech School Inspectorate** stipulate that, in the context of admission and transfer decisions, students with better cognitive abilities or specifically gifted students, those with a better family background or students without special educational needs should not be preferred. The school should not permanently divide learners into classes with a different curriculum and should provide education of comparable quality in all classes <sup>(201)</sup>.

In **Spain**, the law on education <sup>(202)</sup> explicitly aims at creating a balance in the admission of students, stipulating that, to ensure educational quality for all, social cohesion and equal opportunities, the administrations will guarantee an adequate and balanced schooling of students with a specific need for educational support and will have the necessary measures to avoid the segregation of students by socioeconomic status or other characteristics. To this end, the administrations will establish a balanced proportion of students with a specific need for educational support that must be enrolled in each of the public and subsidised private centres and will guarantee the necessary personal and financial resources to the centres to offer this support. Likewise, they will establish the measures that must be adopted when a large proportion of students with such characteristics are concentrated in an educational centre, in order to guarantee the right to education on equal terms for all students.

<sup>(197)</sup> See <https://dre.pt/dre/detalhe/despacho-normativo/6-2018-115093805>.

<sup>(198)</sup> See [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system/temporary-protection\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system/temporary-protection_en).

<sup>(199)</sup> See <https://inscription.cfwb.be>.

<sup>(200)</sup> See [https://web.mon.bg/upload/34577/Zkn\\_PedUchObrazovanie-izm07022023.pdf](https://web.mon.bg/upload/34577/Zkn_PedUchObrazovanie-izm07022023.pdf).

<sup>(201)</sup> See <https://www.csicr.cz/cz/Dokumenty/Kriteria-hodnoceni/Kriteria-hodnoceni-podminek-prubehu-a-vysledku-vz>.

<sup>(202)</sup> See <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2006-7899#a87>.

In **Poland**, if the number of candidates is greater than the number of places, additional admission criteria, defined as follows, are applied: a large family, disability of a child or a family member, single parenthood or health problems limiting the possibility to choose the field of education in a secondary school <sup>(203)</sup>.

In **Slovakia**, the education act <sup>(204)</sup> addressed the education and training of students from disadvantaged social backgrounds and explicitly mentions the rules to avoid segregation: a student whose special educational needs result exclusively from his/her development in a socially disadvantaged environment cannot be admitted to a special school or a special class in a primary or secondary school, but is placed together with other students.

In **Serbia**, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with international organisations and civil society organisations, has prepared a guide for preventing segregation in education and taking measures for desegregation <sup>(205)</sup>. This guide has been created to support employees in the education system when implementing legislation to prevent discrimination and segregation <sup>(206)</sup>. The Ministry of Education also adopted two by-laws – the by-law on detailed criteria for recognising forms of discrimination by an employee, child, student or third party in an educational institution, and the by-law on the institution's actions in the case of suspected or established discriminatory behaviour and insult to reputation, honour or dignity of persons.

It is uncommon, though, for education systems to set specific quotas when organising admissions to promote diversity and inclusion in schools. Nevertheless, some form of calculations and positive actions are used in some education systems (see below) to ensure more balance, linked to socioeconomic factors, ethnic background or special educational needs.

In the **French Community of Belgium**, the decree for the first enrolment in secondary school aims at ensuring a social mix, and therefore includes the socioeconomic background of a student among its indexes for classification <sup>(207)</sup>.

In **Hungary**, to ensure an even proportion of socially disadvantaged students between schools, the ratio of socially disadvantaged students in a school district in cities cannot be more than 15 % above the average ratio of socially disadvantaged students in the whole given city <sup>(208)</sup>.

In **Croatia**, the use of enrolment quotas aims to encourage diversity in schools and is linked to children with special educational needs or disabilities <sup>(209)</sup>.

In **North Macedonia**, Roma students can enrol in a specific public secondary school even if they are 10 % below the required threshold of points and if they satisfy the additional criteria for knowledge and skills in the respective school <sup>(210)</sup>.

## 4.7. Promoting cooperation with parents and families

The data collection for this report also investigated the specific policies and measures favouring closer cooperation between schools and the parents of learners who are disadvantaged and/or at risk of discrimination to support their participation in education. It therefore excluded the usual formal instruments such as parent participation in school governing boards (see, for example, European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018) or the obligation for schools to organise regular parent–teacher meetings on students' progress.

More specific policies and measures are highlighted by slightly less than half of the education systems. A measure that is particularly often reported concerns students with special educational needs, namely the involvement of parents in setting up and following an individual education plan for their child (e.g. in Italy, Cyprus, Slovenia and Montenegro). Some education systems also report specific measures to support parents from vulnerable groups (e.g. in Bulgaria), or parents from migrant backgrounds (e.g. in Czechia, Germany, France, Austria and Slovenia), including, more recently, Ukrainian families (e.g. in Greece). Parents can also be asked to be more involved in the area of prevention of undesirable behaviours such as bullying (e.g. in Malta and Slovenia).

<sup>(203)</sup> See <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20210001082>.

<sup>(204)</sup> See <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2008/245/20220901>.

<sup>(205)</sup> See <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/ministarstva/pravilnik/2016/22/1/reg> and <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/ministarstva/pravilnik/2018/65/2/reg>.

<sup>(206)</sup> See <https://prosveta.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/vodic-za-sprecavanje-sagregacije.pdf>.

<sup>(207)</sup> See [https://gallilex.cfwb.be/fr/leg\\_reg\\_02.php?ncda=35310&referant=I03](https://gallilex.cfwb.be/fr/leg_reg_02.php?ncda=35310&referant=I03).

<sup>(208)</sup> See <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1200020.emm>.

<sup>(209)</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3HH3rYL>, <https://bit.ly/3W1eX5G> and <https://bit.ly/3YCMWTC>.

<sup>(210)</sup> See <https://mon.gov.mk/stored/document/konkurs%20mk.pdf>.

In **Bulgaria**, there are programmes for parental support and home visits. These services are provided to increase parental competence, and to develop parents' knowledge, attitudes and skills. One of the priorities is working with parents from vulnerable groups, developing and implementing student–parent–teacher interaction models and involving mediators/social workers to prevent students from leaving the educational system early <sup>(211)</sup>.

In **Germany**, for successful individual support of lower-performing students, especially those with a migration background, close cooperation with the parents as educational partners plays a central role, for example through projects on 'district mothers' or parent guides, and courses for parents (e.g. offering mothers the chance to learn German in primary school) <sup>(212)</sup>.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the professional team at school cooperates with parents and provides them, among others, with individual counselling and support. In practice, parents of children with special educational needs are often told in a negative way what their child cannot do, what experts cannot do with their child, what his/her peers cannot do, what the school cannot do, etc. This approach is different, and focuses on active listening, as the success of cooperative relations and the quality of cooperation between experts, parents and students largely depend on the quality of communication. Therefore, training experts in better communication plays an important role in professional work and cooperation, to ensure that the conversation allows for active listening and dialogue <sup>(213)</sup>.

Rates of enrolment in mainstream education of learners with an official decision of special educational needs vary between European countries, and they tend to be low in some cases. The most common objective that education systems therefore pursue in terms of policies and measures to promote inclusive access and participation is to increase access to mainstream education for students with special educational needs or disabilities. This is done through the way in which students are assessed and oriented, and the provision of adequate resources for schools to be able to offer the right conditions in terms of human resources and adaptations of the physical and learning environments, including the provision of assistive technologies. Cooperation between schools and parents is also often reinforced in the case of students with special educational needs, notably in defining and following up on individual education plans. Policies promoting cooperation with parents also often target families that have a migration background.

More than half of the education systems also report policies addressing barriers to school access and participation that entail financial support for socioeconomically disadvantaged learners. This is intended to cover school-related costs, involves free or subsidised textbooks and other learning materials, and/or covers the costs of transport, especially for learners from rural and remote areas, and school meals. Besides these interventions, over one third of all education systems report policies promoting social assistance and support, including medical, psychological and/or social services provided in schools. The challenge with all these support interventions is to ensure sustainable comprehensive support structures that last beyond project-based funding measures.

More than half of the education systems report policies and measures promoting blended learning approaches, mostly referring to the use of digital tools for students unable to be in school for health reasons, such as hospital stays. It also includes the provision of electronic educational resources for target groups such as migrant students and students with learning disabilities.

Finally, around half of the education systems report targeted admission policies aiming to tackle segregation and increase diversity in schools. They aim to give priority to disadvantaged students, such as students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds or those with special educational needs. More than one third of the education systems also report measures to reduce or remove administrative barriers to school admission, for example by ensuring access to school education regardless of resident status or by exempting newly arrived students from entrance examinations in the language of schooling.

## 4.8. Summary

Policies and measures to promote the access and participation of learners who are more likely to face barriers are widely reported among European education systems. They mostly target learners with special educational needs or disabilities, but also learners from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and migrant, refugee or ethnic minority students.

<sup>(211)</sup> See <https://ncceci.government.bg/en/node/451>.

<sup>(212)</sup> See [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2010/2010\\_03\\_04-Foerderstrategie-Leistungsschwaechere.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2010/2010_03_04-Foerderstrategie-Leistungsschwaechere.pdf).

<sup>(213)</sup> See [https://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/Ministarstva/mpk/PAO/Pages/Osnovno\\_obrazovanje.aspx](https://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/Ministarstva/mpk/PAO/Pages/Osnovno_obrazovanje.aspx).

# Chapter 5: Strengthening diversity and inclusion in school curricula and assessments

Curricula define the learning content and objectives and may include guidelines on student assessment. They establish the basic framework, based on which schools develop their teaching to meet their students' needs. It is therefore relevant to look at whether and how national curricula acknowledge and promote diversity and inclusion.

The UNESCO International Bureau of Education defines an inclusive curriculum as one that: '[...] takes into consideration and caters for the diverse needs, previous experiences, interests and personal characteristics of all learners. It attempts to ensure that all students are part of the shared learning experiences of the classroom and that equal opportunities are provided regardless of learner differences' <sup>(214)</sup>. This should include what is taught and learnt, to promote respect for, and appreciation of, diversity in society (OECD, 2023). The national curricula analysed in this chapter give some insight into these aspects.

The chapter first looks at the content of national curricula and whether European education systems have recently undertaken any revisions and reforms to strengthen the dimensions of diversity and inclusion. It gives an overview of how curricula address diversity and inclusion (as a general aim, as a cross-curricular area and/or through specific subjects), whether or not curricula focus on specific groups of learners and what the curricula cover in terms of content.

The second part of the chapter presents some top-level policies and measures aiming to adapt student assessments to the needs of different learners.

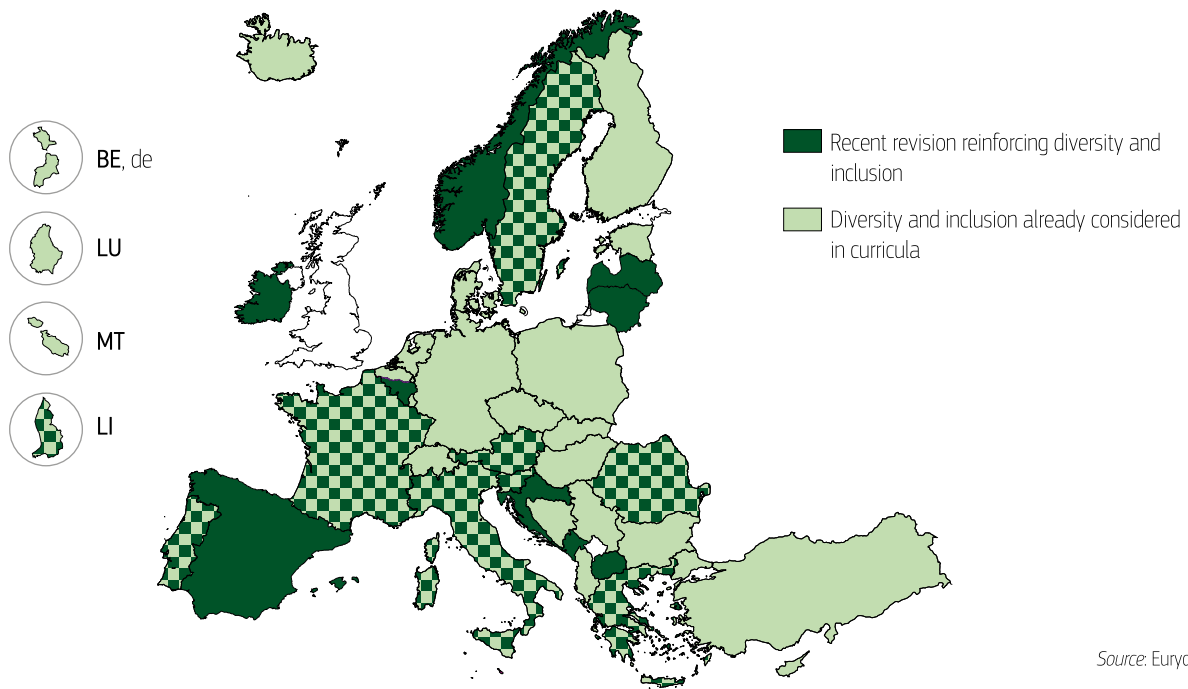
## 5.1. Promoting diversity and inclusion through curricula

Although diversity in societies, and therefore schools, is increasing, this is not a new phenomenon in Europe. References to diversity and inclusion, and to specific learning content to make students aware of it and prepared to engage with it, are already part of many national curricula in Europe (European Commission/ EACEA/Eurydice, 2018). However, the challenges have evolved and more needs to be done. Therefore, the following analysis highlights, in addition to the content related to diversity and inclusion that was already present in curricula, the recent revisions and reforms aiming to further promote these dimensions in schools.

### 5.1.1. Recent curriculum revisions

Most European education systems report that issues related to diversity and inclusion are already considered in their curricula, and nearly half of them indicate that their curricula have been recently revised (in the previous 5 years) to reinforce these dimensions (Figure 5.1). The following examples stem from the education systems that have carried out **recent curriculum revisions**.

<sup>(214)</sup> See <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology/i/inclusive-curriculum>.

**Figure 5.1: School curriculum revisions, since 2018, reinforcing diversity and inclusion, 2022/2023**

Source: Eurydice

In some education systems, the recent curriculum revisions focus on specific groups of learners. In France, recent curriculum reforms (end of 2021) strengthened equality between girls and boys as a fundamental principle throughout the education process <sup>(215)</sup>. In Portugal, a legislative order of February 2022 <sup>(216)</sup> aims to make the curriculum more flexible and inclusive. Schools are given the autonomy to define support measures in accordance with the needs of each learner. For example, students who have recently enrolled in the education system and have insufficient skills in the language of schooling participate in 'Portuguese as a second language' and other learning activities aimed at promoting linguistic immersion to help them access the curriculum. In Montenegro, the ongoing curriculum revision relates to the evaluation and improvement of the form for the individual development educational programme (IDEP) <sup>(217)</sup> for students with special educational needs or disabilities, to better recognise the roles of the school staff and to propose more concrete activities related to peer experience, socialisation and interaction.

In other education systems, recent curriculum revisions have a focus on particular school subjects or areas. In 2019, Croatia adopted a new curriculum for primary and secondary education for the cross-curricular topic of civic education, which addresses diversity, inclusion and non-discrimination <sup>(218)</sup>. In Austria, the

new curriculum for primary and lower secondary education, to be implemented in September 2023, reinforces intercultural education; its aim is that students 'perceive diverse life plans and biographies as social and school normality and treat them with respect, adopt a critical and appreciative attitude as a basis for moral courage and a constructive conflict culture without cultural attributions and clichés as well as recognising, questioning and opposing exclusionary, racist, sexist statements and actions' <sup>(219)</sup>.

In yet another group of education systems, recent curriculum revisions have promoted the topics of diversity and inclusion in more general terms. In Liechtenstein, the curriculum was completely revised in 2021 based on a multidisciplinary approach addressing inclusion and non-discrimination in general, without targeting any specific groups of learners <sup>(220)</sup>. In Norway, although inclusion and non-discrimination were already considered in the curriculum, the core curriculum for primary to upper secondary education was revised, strengthening topics such as human dignity, cultural diversity, critical thinking, ethical reflection, sustainability, democracy and citizenship as essential elements of its ethical basis <sup>(221)</sup>.

<sup>(215)</sup> See <https://eduscol.education.fr/document/12988/download>.

<sup>(216)</sup> See <https://files.dre.pt/2s/2022/02/033000000/0005300054.pdf>.

<sup>(217)</sup> See <https://www.skolskiportal.edu.me/Pages/Default.aspx>.

<sup>(218)</sup> See [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2019\\_01\\_10\\_217.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2019_01_10_217.html).

<sup>(219)</sup> See [https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/zrp/pp/mooc\\_lpneu.html](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/zrp/pp/mooc_lpneu.html).

<sup>(220)</sup> See <https://www.lile.li/?page=10016>.

<sup>(221)</sup> See <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/innforing-og-overgangsordninger-for-nye-lareplaner> and <https://www.udir.no/lk20/overordnet-del/opplaringens-verdigrunnlag/1.1-menneskeverdet/?lang=eng>.

The examples from Latvia, Slovenia, Sweden and North Macedonia illustrate in more detail how curriculum revisions aim to promote diversity and inclusion through learning content and processes.

In **Latvia**, curriculum changes started to be implemented in the 2020/2021 school year <sup>(222)</sup>. The new framework aims to systematically strengthen compassion, solidarity and tolerance. An improved teaching content and approach is gradually being introduced in general education. Already at the primary level, students learn to explain the nature of stereotypes and prejudices, are aware of their impact on interpersonal relationships and can offer options for action to reduce their negative impact. Human rights are integrated in the social sciences curriculum, in which students learn about the role of human rights in modern society, and understanding democratic society, state values and democratic principles of public administration. Bullying is recognised as a special problem in Latvian schools. Therefore, in October 2022, an amendment to the general education law was adopted, indicating that schools have to provide systemic support for the development of social-emotional competences of students. Schools also inform students and teachers about how to recognise and prevent bullying situations.

In 2020, the Council of Experts of the Republic of **Slovenia** for General Education adopted a curriculum on active citizenship for compulsory elective content in upper secondary general education programmes and upper secondary vocational education <sup>(223)</sup>. The content is interdisciplinary and interlinking, and it incorporates the findings of different branches of science (sociology, philosophy, history, geography, etc.). The aim is to promote active, informed and responsible democratic citizenship. Among other skills, students develop opinions and views related to respecting the individuality of people, understanding and accepting diversity, empathy, overcoming stereotypes, nurturing tolerant coexistence, solidarity, volunteering and intergenerational cooperation. They also develop skills for responsible decision-making and operations to build a fairer and united world; uphold human rights; and achieve equality, peace and sustainable development.

In **Sweden**, non-discriminatory curricula are not new, but reforms (in 2018 and 2022) have strengthened these aspects over the years <sup>(224)</sup>. The 2022 reform specifically changed formulations about gender equality, sexuality, consent and relationships, and about other parts of a school's value-based work. For example, it sets out the school's role in promoting students' security and self-esteem; it states that the school must counteract various forms of intolerance, violence and oppression, and shape and convey the values and rights expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each student must respect the self-worth and the physical and personal integrity of others and learn how they can get help if they experience any problems. The reform in 2022 also strengthened content on national minorities in the syllabuses for civics and Swedish. The new formulations on gender equality, which at the compulsory school level have existed since 2018 but are new at the upper secondary level, deal with, among other things, a school's responsibility to make visible and counteract gender patterns that limit students' learning, choices and development.

In **North Macedonia**, the new concept note for primary education <sup>(225)</sup>, implemented in March 2021, provided for new national curricula in the first and fourth grades of primary education (in 2021) and for the second and fifth grades of primary education (in 2022). The concept note relies on inclusiveness, gender sensibility/equality and interculturalism as key principles. The concept note envisages the following short- and long-term effects of the cross-curricular integration of these principles: fewer students dropping out of primary education; an increased sense of equality/equitability among students of vulnerable categories; greater achievements among students with special educational needs; increased satisfaction among students from being at school and studying; fewer gender and ethnic stereotypes and prejudices among students and faculty; fewer cases of gender-based violence in the school context, and a reduction in the negative consequences to the health and well-being of students as a result of such violence; sex/gender does not play a role in the selection of secondary education and future vocation; development of intercultural competences; development of a national identity; and improved interethnic integration in education and social cohesion in society.

<sup>(222)</sup> See <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/303768-regulations-regarding-the-state-basic-education-standard-and-model-basic-education-programmes>.

<sup>(223)</sup> See [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2022/programi/media/pdf/aktivno\\_drzavljanstvo.pdf](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2022/programi/media/pdf/aktivno_drzavljanstvo.pdf).

<sup>(224)</sup> See <https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/kallsidor/nytt-i-laroplanernas-inledande-delar-2022>.

<sup>(225)</sup> See <https://mon.gov.mk/stored/document/koncepcija%20osnovno%20obrazovanie%20en.pdf>.

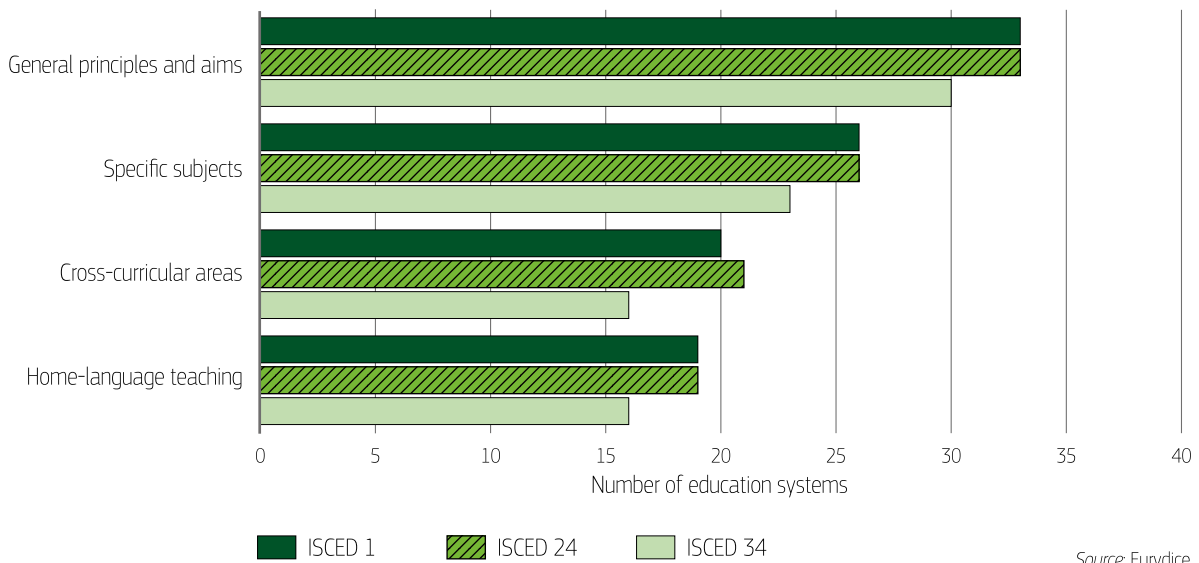


### 5.1.2. Curriculum areas addressing diversity and inclusion

Curriculum content that promotes values of diversity and inclusion is frequently part of citizenship education (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018). However, as seen in the previous examples and shown in Figure 5.2, it can also be included in the general aims of the curriculum as well as in various different subjects and cross-curricular areas.

In terms of education levels, Figure 5.2. shows that diversity and inclusion are most often addressed in primary education and lower secondary education. In upper secondary education, this seems to be slightly less frequently the case. Still, even at this education level, more than half of the European education systems report that diversity and inclusion are addressed among the general aims of the curriculum and/or through specific subjects.

**Figure 5.2: School curriculum areas addressing diversity and inclusion, 2022/2023**



#### Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting the area in which diversity and inclusion are addressed in their current curricula (in descending order, according to the overall number). A country-specific overview can be found in the annex (Table 5.2A).

tongue and culture, patriotism, cultural diversity, tolerance, environmental sustainability, rule of law, solidarity, responsibility and gender equality). School life shall be organised based on principles of ethnic, racial and gender equality.

Most European education systems report that diversity and inclusion are embedded in the **general principles and aims** of the curriculum. An example of this approach can be found in Estonia.

In Estonia, core values deemed important in the national curriculum <sup>(226)</sup> derive from the ethics principles specified in the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the basic documents of the EU. General human values (honesty, compassion, respect for life, justice, human dignity, respect for self and others) are enshrined as core values, as are social values (liberty, democracy, respect for mother

More than half of the education systems indicate that diversity and inclusion are promoted through a wide range of **specific subjects**. These topics are most often addressed through the teaching of citizenship or civic education, social sciences, ethics, philosophy, moral education and religion, but also through the teaching of history, foreign languages and geography. A few education systems also mention health education, physical education and music as opportunities for promoting diversity and inclusion; only a minority of education systems cite some other subjects in this regard, such as personal development and counselling (e.g. in Romania), natural sciences (e.g. in Hungary) and technology (e.g. in the French Community of Belgium and in Spain). Indeed, current technological developments are raising important questions related

<sup>(226)</sup> See <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/108032023005?leiaKehtiv>.

to inclusion, for example how to deal with bias in artificial intelligence algorithms (UNESCO, 2021b).

In Luxembourg, a new subject called ‘life and society’ was introduced as a common values education course<sup>(227)</sup>. The course replaced religious instruction and moral and social formation since the 2016/2017 school year in secondary education and since the 2017/2018 school year in primary education. It aims to offer all young people a common course that will help them build their own reference points while respecting those of others. Of course, inclusion and non-discrimination are also part of other subjects, such as philosophy, languages, history and geography, at all school education levels.

Around half of the education systems report that diversity and inclusion are promoted through **cross-curricular areas**. One commonly indicated cross-curricular area is intercultural or multicultural education (e.g. in Czechia, Germany, Estonia, Slovakia and North Macedonia). Another common cross-curricular area is civic education or active citizenship (e.g. in Croatia and Hungary), which, in other education systems, is taught as a separate subject (see above). However civic education can also be both a common cross-curricular area and a separate subject (e.g. in Portugal); it can be taught as part of transversal competences (e.g. in Finland) or through the area of equality and gender education (e.g. in Austria). In Malta, there is a specific cross-curricular topic that aims to promote diversity and inclusion known as ‘Education for diversity’, which is accompanied by specific learning outcomes<sup>(228)</sup>.

Less than half of the European education systems report **home-language teaching**<sup>(229)</sup> to students who speak a language that is different from the language of schooling as a measure aiming to promote diversity and inclusion (e.g. in Sweden). In some education systems, this is done as part of a long-standing practice of teaching minority languages (e.g. in Finland and Norway), whereas, in others, it is linked to recent curriculum revisions (e.g. in Croatia). In Austria, home-language teaching was renamed ‘first-language teaching’; it aims to expand basic bilingual or multilingual communication skills and intercultural skills, but also to promote students’ learning motivation, self-esteem and joy in the use of

languages<sup>(230)</sup>. Ireland reports that three new heritage languages can be studied to Leaving Certificate level<sup>(231)</sup> since September 2020, namely Lithuanian, Polish and Portuguese. Lithuania also highlights efforts to improve children’s education in minority languages (see the country example below).

In 2012, the Lithuanian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport developed guidelines to improve children’s education in, and the teaching of, minority languages<sup>(232)</sup>. The guidelines specify arrangements made for setting a course towards the development of education in minority languages with the goal of preserving the country’s cultural diversity. For the first time, it was stated that Lithuanian schools should become more open and extend their communication with schools providing education in national minority languages.

### 5.1.3. Student groups targeted by curricula addressing diversity and inclusion

Concerning the student groups targeted by current curricula addressing diversity and inclusion, half of the European education systems report that these topics are treated without explicitly targeting any particular group of learners (Figure 5.3). Still, more than one third of the education systems mention that curricula explicitly refer to students with special educational needs or disabilities and ethnic minority students. Other student groups targeted by curricula addressing diversity and inclusion are migrant and refugee students, girls/boys, and to a lesser extent students from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background and religious minority students. The least mentioned target group is LGBTIQ+ students.

<sup>(227)</sup> See [https://vieso.script.lu/sites/default/files/2020-12/Rahmenlehrplan%20VIES01\\_0.pdf](https://vieso.script.lu/sites/default/files/2020-12/Rahmenlehrplan%20VIES01_0.pdf).

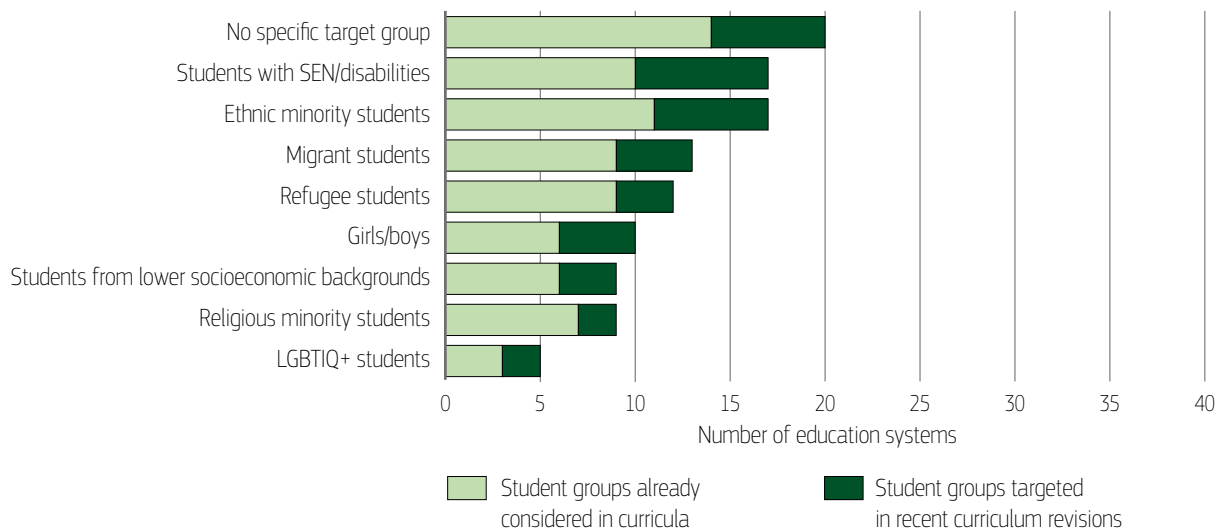
<sup>(228)</sup> See <https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Resources/The-NCF/Documents/NCF.pdf>.

<sup>(229)</sup> For more information on home-language teaching and regional or minority languages, see the 2023 edition of the Eurydice report *Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe* (<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/key-data-teaching-languages-school-europe-2023-edition>).

<sup>(230)</sup> See <https://www.paedagogikpaket.at/images/Kernbotschaften-LP.pdf>.

<sup>(231)</sup> See <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dd328-languages-connect-irelands-strategy-for-foreign-languages-in-education-2017-2026>.

<sup>(232)</sup> See [https://smsm.lrv.lt/uploads/smsm/documents/files/Svietimas\\_pradinis\\_ugdymas/pdf16112012100602.pdf](https://smsm.lrv.lt/uploads/smsm/documents/files/Svietimas_pradinis_ugdymas/pdf16112012100602.pdf) and <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/df672e20b93311e5be9bf78e07ed6470>.

**Figure 5.3: Student groups targeted in school curricula addressing diversity and inclusion, 2022/2023**

Source: Eurydice

**Explanatory note**

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting the student groups targeted by their current curricula addressing diversity and inclusion (in descending order, firstly, according to the overall number and, secondly, according to the number of education systems with recent curriculum revisions). The student groups may have been targeted in recent curriculum revisions, or they were already considered but the focus was reinforced or adjusted in recent revisions. In the latter case, education systems focused on reporting the recent revision. A country-specific overview can be found in the annex (Table 5.3A).

Figure 5.3 also shows whether the different student groups were already considered in school curricula or whether they were targeted in recent curriculum revisions (in the previous 5 years). The data show that most recent revisions focus on students with special educational needs or disabilities and ethnic minority students, or they address diversity and inclusion more generally, that is, without a specific target group. This is followed by revisions targeting migrant students and girls/boys, then refugee students and those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, religious minority students, and, finally, LGBTIQ+ students. The reported initiatives include both ways to make the curricula more accessible to the student groups and representations of the student groups throughout the curricula.

As mentioned in the chapter on access and participation (see Chapter 4), **students with special educational needs or disabilities** enrolled in mainstream education can follow individual education plans, which provide individualised curriculum adaptations and flexibility. That is also the focus of most reported initiatives in the context of promoting more inclusive curricula.

**In Greece**, for students with special educational needs, appropriately differentiated syllabi are designed and implemented<sup>(233)</sup>. They make use of a wide range of special learning methodology approaches and strategies, such as breaking learning objectives into smaller units and direct instruction teaching. There is also provision for recovery programmes for students with special educational needs, conducted by psychologists, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists.

**In Croatia**, the curriculum indicates that, for students with special educational needs (students with disabilities and gifted students), teachers plan an individualised curriculum including individualised/differentiated procedures, learning objectives, educational outcomes, scope and depth of learning content, teaching strategies and activities<sup>(234)</sup>.

Similarly, in **Lithuania**, for students with special educational needs and in accordance with the principle of inclusive education, learning content can be selected and adapted, considering individual needs for assistance and services in the educational process<sup>(235)</sup>.

**Ethnic minority students**, including Roma students, **migrant and refugee students** are also widely

<sup>(233)</sup> See <http://iep.edu.gr/el/special-education-yliko/yliko-entaksiakis-ekpaidefsis> and <http://www.prosvasimo.iep.edu.gr/el>.

<sup>(234)</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3HH3rYL> and <https://bit.ly/3W1eX5G>.

<sup>(235)</sup> See [https://www.emokykla.lt/upload/EMOKYKLA/BP/2022-10-10/PATVIRTINTA\\_Aurelija/00\\_BP%20ivadas\\_2022-08-18.pdf](https://www.emokykla.lt/upload/EMOKYKLA/BP/2022-10-10/PATVIRTINTA_Aurelija/00_BP%20ivadas_2022-08-18.pdf).

reported target groups in efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in school curricula. The general aim here is to address non-representation or misrepresentation of these groups and to help the students value their own cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as the Hungarian and Finnish examples illustrate. The Greek example points to the experience of flexible curriculum adaptations for students from vulnerable social groups and in particular Ukrainian refugees.

**In Hungary**, ethnic minority literature and art examples are represented in music and art teachings, and are also represented in history, ethics and civic studies.

**In Finland**, education for Sámi students must consider the fact that the Sámi are an indigenous people with their own language and culture. In the education provided for Sámi students, the particular objective is supporting the young people in growing into their language, culture and community, and building their identities. It also supports the relearning of a lost indigenous language and the revival of the language. It promotes knowledge of the history and culture of the Sámi community extending across the territories of several countries, as well as awareness of the Sámi as one of the indigenous peoples of the world.

**In Greece**, the educational priority zones and reception classes <sup>(236)</sup> provide equal access to education for vulnerable and marginalised social groups. The objective is to provide innovative, flexible alternative teaching strategies in order to ensure that the particular educational and social needs of students are met. Regarding refugee students, and considering also the recent experience with learners from Ukraine, the following practices are applied: increased participation in school subjects for which verbal communication is not necessary (art, music, gymnastics, mathematics, informatics, foreign languages, etc.), or in other subjects, in accordance with parents' preferences and school provision, and in collaboration with the school counsellors.

Regarding **girls and boys** and gender identity, the challenge is to deconstruct gender stereotypes in curricula and to promote gender equality. It also means that teachers need to approach girls and boys equally in the education process, allowing each student to make study choices free from gender preconceptions.

<sup>(236)</sup> See Law 3879/2010 ([https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek\\_pdf=20100100163](https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=20100100163)) as amended by Law 4763/2020 ([https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek\\_pdf=202001002549](https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=202001002549)).

**In France**, sex education is based on the humanist values of freedom, equality and tolerance, and respect for oneself and others. It includes education for health and well-being, but also the acceptance of difference. This transversal training covers the entire school career in secondary schooling and all school subjects <sup>(237)</sup>.

**In North Macedonia**, the curricula, revised in 2021, among other aims, strengthen the principles of inclusiveness and gender equality/sensitivity, which are integrated across all subjects in the first, second, fourth and fifth grades of primary education. The curricula specify that 'the teacher ensures inclusiveness by including all students in all activities during the lesson. [...] During the implementation of the activities, the teacher treats both girls and boys equally, taking care not to assign them gender-stereotyped roles. When forming the work groups, the teacher tries to ensure a balance in terms of gender. When choosing additional teaching materials, he or she uses illustrations and examples that are gender and ethnically/culturally sensitive and encourage gender equality, that is, promote interculturalism' <sup>(238)</sup>.

A focus on **students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, religious minority students** and **LGBTIQ+ students** is overall less common, including in recent curriculum revisions. However, the following examples from Germany and France show how curricula can, for example, promote the objective of combating antisemitism, racism and all other forms of discrimination.

**In Germany**, the joint recommendation of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the Joint Federal and State Commission to fight antisemitism and protect Jewish life and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs on dealing with antisemitism in schools describes antisemitic stereotypes and misrepresentations of Jewish people and develops strategies to counter antisemitism. This includes imparting knowledge about Jewish life and history and antisemitism in many different school subjects and giving the opportunity of encounters with Jewish people <sup>(239)</sup>.

<sup>(237)</sup> See [https://www.education.gouv.fr/bo/18/Hebdo33/MENE1824340C.htm?cid\\_bo=133890](https://www.education.gouv.fr/bo/18/Hebdo33/MENE1824340C.htm?cid_bo=133890).

<sup>(238)</sup> See <https://www.bro.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/%D0%9D%D0%9F-%D0%9C%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BB-%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B8%D0%BA-II-%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B4.pdf>, pp. 21–22.

<sup>(239)</sup> See [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/pdf/PresseUndAktuell/es/2021/2021\\_06\\_10-Gem-Empfehlung-Antisemitismus.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/pdf/PresseUndAktuell/es/2021/2021_06_10-Gem-Empfehlung-Antisemitismus.pdf).

In France, combating antisemitism, racism and all other forms of discrimination is given priority in students' civic education and has recently been reinforced by transversal teacher and staff training covering the entire secondary education path and all school subjects <sup>(240)</sup>.

Beyond the question of whether school curricula promote diversity and inclusion by focusing on specific groups of learners, the more general question is how flexible curricula are to adapt to the individual needs of learners or to social and geographical contexts. This is an issue that is acknowledged in related research, for example Alves, Campos Pinto and Pinto (2020, p. 282) state that '[...] if schools are encouraged to be inclusive, but there is a prescriptive curriculum that does not allow teachers to adapt contents, pedagogical approaches, or assessment to different student characteristics and needs, then the resulting paradox can prevent genuine inclusiveness.'

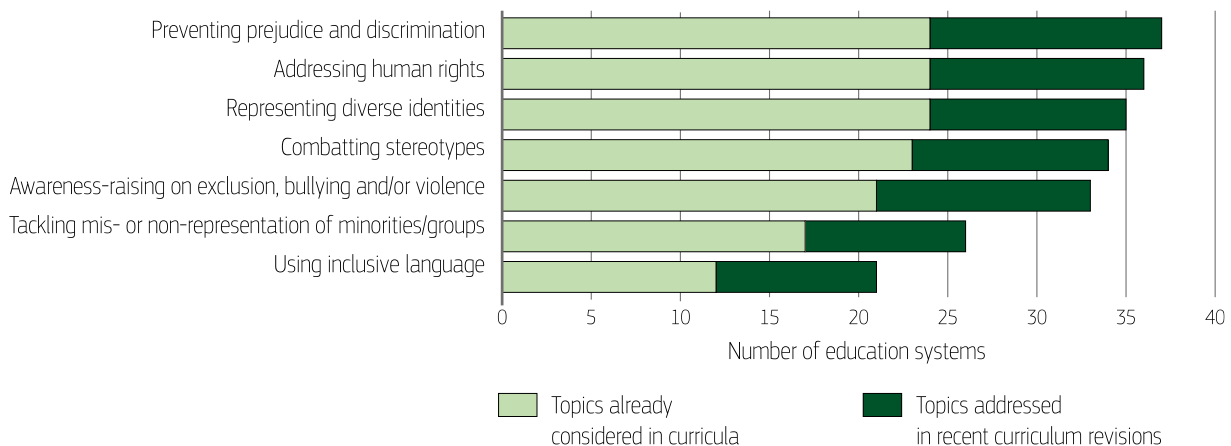
Some education systems report relevant initiatives. France, for instance, indicates adaptations of history

and geography curricula in overseas territories to better contextualise learning <sup>(241)</sup>. In Portugal, a legislative order of February 2022 <sup>(242)</sup> aims to make the curriculum more flexible and adapted to the needs of each learner (see Section 5.1.1 for more details).

#### 5.1.4. Curriculum content related to diversity and inclusion

In terms of curriculum content, diversity and inclusion can be addressed in many ways. The categories in Figure 5.4 are evocative of only some of the relevant topics, and they partly overlap. The purpose is mainly to see if some topics are more widespread than others in school curricula across Europe. The figure also indicates whether the different topics were already considered in school curricula or whether they were addressed in recent curriculum revisions (in the previous 5 years). The data show that the topic of preventing prejudice and discrimination has been most frequently addressed in recent curriculum revisions; however, all other topics have been nearly as frequently considered in recent reforms.

**Figure 5.4: Topics related to diversity and inclusion in school curricula, 2022/2023**



Source: Eurvdice

#### Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting topics related to diversity and inclusion that are addressed in their current curricula (in descending order of overall number). The topics may have been addressed in recent curriculum revisions, or they were already considered but reinforced or adjusted in recent revisions. In the latter case, education systems focused on reporting the recent revision. A country-specific overview can be found in the annex (Table 5.4A).

The most common topic overall, namely **preventing prejudice and discrimination**, has also been reinforced through most recent curriculum revisions. The Estonian example illustrates its integration in social science subjects, the French example relates to language education and interpersonal relations, the Slovenian one to citizenship education and the Czech one to the cross-curricular topic of multicultural education.

<sup>(240)</sup> See <https://eduscol.education.fr/1720/agir-contre-le-racisme-et-l-antisemitisme>.

<sup>(241)</sup> See [https://pedagogie.ac-guadeloupe.fr/histoire\\_et\\_geographie/adaptation\\_programmes\\_nationaux\\_denseignement\\_dhistoire\\_et\\_geographie\\_cycles](https://pedagogie.ac-guadeloupe.fr/histoire_et_geographie/adaptation_programmes_nationaux_denseignement_dhistoire_et_geographie_cycles).

<sup>(242)</sup> See <https://files.dre.pt/2s/2022/02/033000000/0005300054.pdf>.

In **Estonia**, topics related to cultural identity are integrated in social science subjects and aim to raise awareness of and increase participation in intercultural communication, value tolerance and one's own culture and the heritage of other cultures, condemn discrimination and recognise the cultural diversity of past and present societies.

In **France**, education of otherness is at the very heart of language education curricula. Moreover, the introduction of intercultural mediation fosters students as social actors capable of facilitating communication between different social groups. In upper secondary schools in particular, the cultural notions *l'art de vivre ensemble*, *identités et échanges* and *diversité et inclusion* carry the objective of intercultural dialogue. The current programmes are from 2019 <sup>(243)</sup>.

In **Slovenia**, the curriculum of active citizenship for upper secondary education, introduced in 2020, set the objective for students to develop opinions and views related to respecting the individuality of people, understanding and accepting diversity, empathy, overcoming stereotypes, nurturing tolerant coexistence, solidarity, volunteering and intergenerational cooperation. They also develop skills for responsible decision-making and operations to build a more fair and united world; uphold human rights; and achieve equality, peace and sustainable development.

In **Czechia**, the cross-curricular topic of multicultural education aims to achieve an environment that brings together learners from various social and cultural backgrounds; each school should ensure an atmosphere in which all will feel equal, in which minority students are successful in a majority environment and in which majority students learn about their minority classmates' cultures. In this way, multicultural education contributes to mutual understanding between both groups, tolerance and the elimination of animosity and prejudices towards the 'unknown'. It also teaches learners to be aware of the possible impacts of their verbal and non-verbal statements and to be prepared to take responsibility for their actions <sup>(244)</sup>.

Most education systems have also been **addressing human rights** in their curriculum, especially as a part of citizenship or civics education.

In **Croatia**, the curriculum for the cross-curricular topic civic education, adopted in 2019, states that civic education encompasses knowledge about human rights and the characteristics of the democratic community and political systems. The skills on which civic education is mostly focused include critical thinking about ethical principles and communication skills necessary for social and political participation. Responsibility, human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity are fundamental values promoted by civic education, and particular importance is attached to the development of a responsible attitude towards public goods and readiness to contribute to the common good <sup>(245)</sup>.

Many education systems also report **representing diverse identities** as a topic related to diversity and inclusion in their curricula. Below is an example from the Spanish curriculum, revised in 2022.

In **Spain**, the general objectives for primary education expect students to 'know, understand and respect different cultures and differences between people, equal rights and opportunities for men and women, and non-discrimination against people based on ethnicity, sexual orientation or identity, religion or belief, disability or other terms' <sup>(246)</sup>. In lower secondary education, students learn about interculturalism, social inclusion and respect for diversity and ethnocultural and gender identities, and LGTBIQ+ rights <sup>(247)</sup>. In upper secondary education, students learn to promote effective equality of rights and opportunities for women and men, to analyse and critically assess existing inequalities and the role of women in history, and to promote real equality and non-discrimination based on birth, sex, racial or ethnic origin, disability, age, illness, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other personal or social condition or circumstance <sup>(248)</sup>.

Related to the topic of **combating stereotypes**, the example of the Swedish curriculum illustrates how gender stereotypes can be tackled.

The **Swedish** curriculum stipulates that a school should actively and consciously promote equal rights and opportunities of all students, regardless of gender <sup>(249)</sup>. It also has a responsibility to make visible and combat gender patterns that

<sup>(243)</sup> See <https://eduscol.education.fr/1726/programmes-et-ressources-en-langues-vivantes-voie-gt>.

<sup>(244)</sup> See <https://www.edu.cz/rvp-ramcove-vzdelavaci-programy/ramcove-vzdelavaci-program-pro-zakladni-vzdelavani-rvp-zv>.

<sup>(245)</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3PZDdmJ>.

<sup>(246)</sup> See <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2022-3296#a7>.

<sup>(247)</sup> See <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2022-4975#ai-2>.

<sup>(248)</sup> See <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2022-5521#a7>.

<sup>(249)</sup> See <https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/kallsidor/nytt-i-laroplanernas-inledande-delar-2022>.

limit students' learning and development. How the school organises education, how learners are treated and the demands and expectations they have all contribute to shaping students' perceptions of what is female and what is male. The school should therefore organise education so that students meet and work together, and test and develop their abilities and interests, with the same opportunities and on equal terms, regardless of gender.

Objectives related to the area of **awareness-raising on exclusion, bullying and/or violence** can be more broadly linked to understanding power, conflict and inequalities, as the Estonian example shows.

In **Estonia**, the curriculum states that, by the end of the third grade, a student should understand that bullying and violence are behaviours that are neither accepted nor permitted and should know how to get help if they experience bullying or violence <sup>(250)</sup>. In upper secondary education, social studies cover the elements of society as a social system: social structure (groups, strata, communities) and social relationships and processes (e.g. cooperation and conflict, power, submission and resistance, integration and differentiation, exclusion and participation, mobility, stratification) <sup>(251)</sup>.

Compared with the previous topics, **tackling misrepresentation or non-representation of minorities/groups** is less frequently addressed as a topic related to diversity and inclusion in school curricula. Education systems refer in this regard mainly to valuing, respecting and defending minorities.

In **Iceland**, the current curriculum <sup>(252)</sup> specifies, as an example regarding the topic of tackling misrepresentation or non-representation of minorities/groups: 'Equality education incorporates, among other things, studies of gender and sexual orientation. The fundamental pillar of equality also emphasises education concerning culture, nationality, languages, religion, and values. One of the tasks is the development of Iceland as a multicultural society.'

**Using inclusive language** is least frequently reported as a topic related to diversity and inclusion in curricula; however, still over half of the education systems report it. The Spanish and Croatian curricula provide examples of how inclusive language is promoted.

In **Spain**, the use of inclusive, respectful, non-sexist and non-violent language is explicitly stated among the competences to be acquired at all levels from primary to upper secondary education <sup>(253)</sup>.

In **Croatia**, schools need to promote and implement the use of a healthy discourse on human health, identity and relationships that contributes to mutual understanding, respect and protection of individuals and groups. Teachers and a school's professional service must avoid stigmatising terms and evaluate the necessary application of gender-balanced language in order to promote personalities that respect and appreciate differences and foster equality while avoiding stereotypes in speech, behaviour, etc. <sup>(254)</sup>.

## 5.2. Adapting student assessments to learners' needs

In line with the curriculum, education systems need to promote diversity and inclusion in assessment frameworks by adapting them to learners' characteristics and needs. A recent prospective analysis stresses that 'equitable assessment is triggered by the growing socioeconomic inequalities, as well as the growing diversity of the student population in Europe. [...] Migrant and minority students face (and will continue facing in the future) – cultural and linguistic – barriers in school, which can vary depending on their status and background.' (European Commission, 2020, p. 51).

The analysis identifies three main elements of equitable assessment: culturally sensitive assessment, linguistically sensitive assessment and consideration of the socioeconomic background of learners (European Commission, 2020). Moreover, international conventions and research <sup>(255)</sup> underline that student assessments need to provide 'reasonable accommodations' for learners with disabilities. Assessment information that systematically includes all students can be used to adjust teaching content and approaches, to identify and overcome barriers to learning and to inform support decisions (see also Chapter 6, Section 6.1).

Across European education systems, student assessment, both formative and summative, is generally regulated by education policies. Its main goal is to evaluate the progress of individual learners

<sup>(250)</sup> See <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/108032023005?leiaKehtiv>.

<sup>(251)</sup> See <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/524092014009/consolide>.

<sup>(252)</sup> See [https://www.government.is/library/01-Ministries/Ministry-of-Education/Curriculum/adalnrsk\\_greinask\\_ens\\_2014.pdf](https://www.government.is/library/01-Ministries/Ministry-of-Education/Curriculum/adalnrsk_greinask_ens_2014.pdf) (p. 20).

<sup>(253)</sup> See <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2022-3296>, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2022-4975> and <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2022-5521>.

<sup>(254)</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3PZDdmJ>.

<sup>(255)</sup> See <https://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en/issue-briefs/improve-learning/disability-inclusive-education-and-learning>.

in the learning process and in reaching the learning objectives (assessment of learning). At the same time, it provides information to the student, the teacher and the parents about any specific learning needs, and thus provides feedback on how the learning content and process needs to be adapted to the individual student (i.e. assessment for learning and assessment as learning).

General assessment guidelines stress that teachers need to take into account the age and individual characteristics of students, and their current mental and physical disposition (e.g. in Slovakia). And, although another essential principle of assessment is equal treatment, the same guidelines sometimes require teachers to consider students' individual situations, as, for example, indicated in Finland's principles of student assessment.

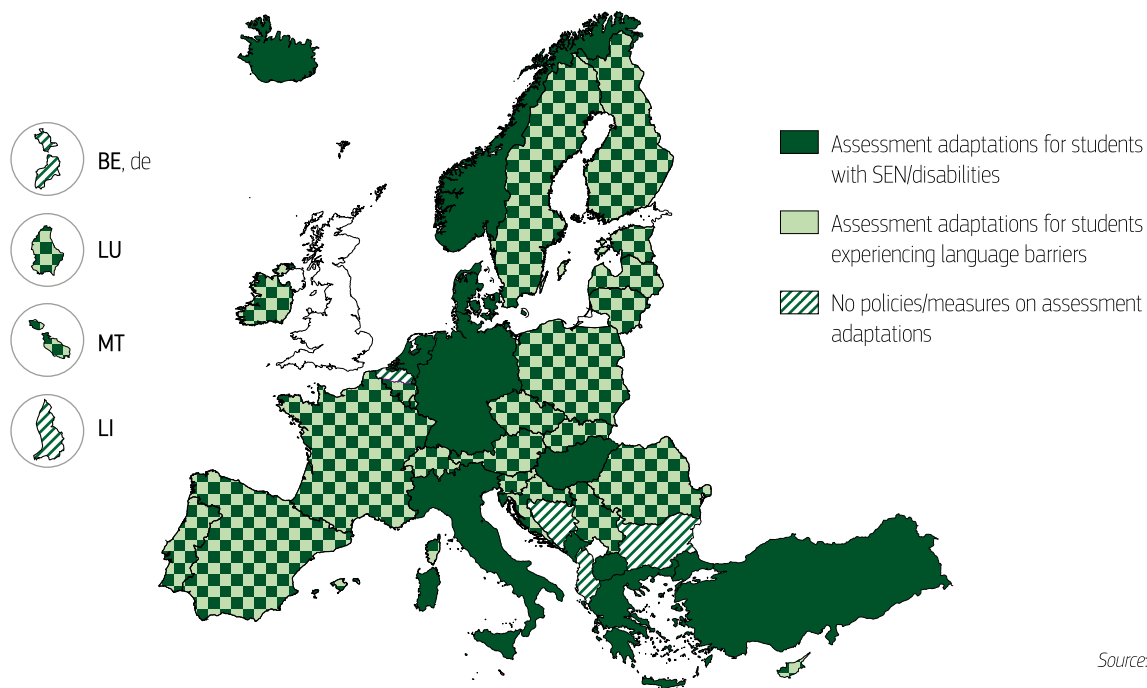
**In Finland**, assessments are planned and implemented in accordance with a student's age and capabilities. Students' different ways of learning and working are considered, and attention is paid to ensuring that there are no obstacles

to demonstrating competence. A student's state of health and special needs will be considered in the assessment, along with the need for learning support and any other obstacles to demonstrating competence. A student's level of proficiency in the language of schooling and the language of the subject assessed must be considered in the assessment of students from migrant backgrounds or students with a different mother tongue <sup>(256)</sup>.

National tests, as one specific form of assessment, are, by nature, standardised and therefore cannot be easily adapted to individual learners. However, some education systems mention specific support measures for learners with special educational needs who participate in those tests (e.g. in Latvia).

In addition to these more general provisions, European education systems report policies and measures on specific adaptations of student assessments for learners who need additional support, which refers mainly to students with special educational needs or disabilities and those experiencing language barriers (Figure 5.5).

**Figure 5.5: Top-level policies and measures on assessment adaptations to respond to learners' needs, 2022/2023**



Source: Eurydice

### Explanatory note

The figure shows education systems in which top-level policies or measures require specific adaptations of student assessments to respond to learners' needs. General guidelines referring to the need to adapt formative and summative assessments to individual learners are not considered a specific adaptation and are therefore not reflected here.

<sup>(256)</sup> See [https://www.opi.fi/sites/default/files/documents/perusopetuksen-arviointiluku-10-2-2020\\_1.pdf](https://www.opi.fi/sites/default/files/documents/perusopetuksen-arviointiluku-10-2-2020_1.pdf) and [https://www.opi.fi/sites/default/files/documents/perusopetuksen-arviointiluku-10-2-2020\\_1.pdf](https://www.opi.fi/sites/default/files/documents/perusopetuksen-arviointiluku-10-2-2020_1.pdf).



In fact, almost all European education systems report policies or measures on **assessment adaptations for learners with special educational needs or disabilities**. The same regulatory frameworks sometimes define how students with special educational needs are included in mainstream education (see also Chapter 4, Section 4.1) and the learning support provided to them to address learning and development barriers and needs (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2).

The assessment adaptations form part of the development of individual education programmes, providing specific learning objectives, content and methods. For instance, if alternative tools are used for learning, the same tools can be made available for assessments. This is often referred to as ‘reasonable accommodation’ of assessment models. Adaptations for learners with special educational needs sometimes means exempting students from taking certain exams and tests or accommodating for certain disadvantages during assessment. In this sense, adaptations of assessment are an exception to the principle of equal treatment of candidates, to ensure equal opportunities, as indicated, for example, in guidelines in the German-speaking Community of Belgium (see the country example below) and Finland <sup>(257)</sup>. In Ireland, national guidelines point to the need to find a balance between reasonable accommodations as modifications of how a test is administered and not compromising the integrity of the examination system <sup>(258)</sup>.

**The German-speaking Community of Belgium** has two specific measures related to the assessment of students with special educational needs: grade protection and the compensation of disadvantage. The grade protection (*Notenschutz*) can be granted to students to release them from assessments in certain subject areas, and it applies only to students with the following conditions: a sensory impairment such as visual or hearing impairment; a perception disorder such as an auditory or visual perception disorder; a learning disability such as dyslexia, dysgraphia or dyscalculia; a physical impairment; or a temporary functional impairment.

The ‘compensation for disadvantage’ (*Nachteilsausgleich*) refers to a set of pedagogical measures intended to compensate for specific impairments of students in primary or secondary education. In other contexts, this is generally referred to as ‘accommodations’, which are support measures that concern how students learn, in contrast to ‘modifications’, which rather concern what students learn (Mezzanotte, 2020). Accommodations are intended to help students with special educational needs learn the same

information as other students through supportive changes to their learning environment. The compensation for disadvantage does not absolve students from having to meet the competence expectations of the core curricula (and thus does not appear in the students’ report cards) and can be of a technical, personal, organisational or infrastructural nature. For example, visually impaired students might be provided with worksheets in an appropriate font or size, or students with a learning disability might be given additional time to complete a test or exam. The measures to compensate for disadvantages are considered appropriate if they are adapted to students’ individual needs; if they encourage students’ participation in activities; and if they ensure students’ autonomy, security and dignity (MDG, 2022) <sup>(259)</sup>.

There are more examples of how assessment guidelines promote specific adaptations for learners with special educational needs, regarding the general conditions, the format and the tools used for the tests (see the country examples below).

As a way of ensuring equal opportunities in tests and examinations for all students with special needs, in 2018 the Ministry of Education in **Portugal** designed the ‘Guide for the application of special conditions for tests and examinations’ <sup>(260)</sup> to regulate adaptations in the external assessment processes. These adjustments consist of changing the type of test, the assessment and certification instruments and the assessment conditions, regarding, among other aspects, the forms and means of communication, periodicity, duration and venue. Some special conditions defined are computer use, guided reading of texts, answers dictated to a teacher, rewriting of answers by a teacher, help in handling the equipment or examination sheets, and taking the tests or examinations in a separate room.

Special conditions in tests and examinations are carried out on the proposal of the class teacher/teacher council or of the class director/class council. The type of adaptation depends on a students’ profile. It may consist of adapted tests and exams for blind or low-vision students; adapted tests and exams for students with severe or profound deafness; adaptation of space/material; teacher assistance; or rest periods, supervised breaks, compensatory time or extra time.

<sup>(257)</sup> See <https://www.ylioppilastutkinto.fi/en/regulation-and-guidelines>.

<sup>(258)</sup> See <https://www.examinations.ie/schools/EN-1013-80178722.pdf>.

<sup>(259)</sup> See <https://ostbelgienbildung.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-6272>.

<sup>(260)</sup> See [http://esfrl.edu.pt/20222023/exames/2223\\_Guia\\_Adap\\_jne2023.pdf](http://esfrl.edu.pt/20222023/exames/2223_Guia_Adap_jne2023.pdf).

In **Slovenia**, the alternative ways of formative and summative assessment of students with special educational needs are specified in the relevant rules and guidelines for adapted provision of the basic school programme for children with special educational needs <sup>(261)</sup>. The guidelines cover the following:

- the method of forming questions;
- the method of delivering answers (oral assessment for students with reading–writing difficulties, etc.);
- time (no time pressure);
- organisation of assessment (divided in two or several completed units and in two or several parts/meetings);
- form of written material (more graphics and colour, open-ended questions, etc.);
- use of technical aids (calculator, computer, didactical materials, etc.);
- spatial requirements (quiet corners or even outside the classroom).

As the assessment guidelines <sup>(262)</sup> in Greece specify, adapting assessments to the needs of learners with special educational needs can also imply observation of a student’s behaviour and assessment results over a long period of time by all those involved (teachers, parents, friends, therapists, relatives) to ensure the reliability and objectivity of the assessment.

The second most widely reported policies or measures on assessment adaptations concern **learners who experience language barriers**, especially migrant and/or refugee students, whose mother tongue is different from the language of schooling. More than half of the European education systems have guidelines related to this. They generally apply starting from the admission procedure, for which entry conditions, such as language entrance exams, may be adapted (see also Chapter 4, Section 4.6).

Assessment guidelines sometimes specify that the level of command in the language of schooling is considered during any examination, at least for a certain period of time (e.g. the first year of study, in Slovakia). The adaptations can, moreover, be related to the learning and assessment of languages, for

instance, by assessing the language of schooling instead of another modern foreign language for students with a different home language (e.g. in Austria), exempting students from certain evaluations (e.g. in Modern or Ancient Greek in Cyprus), using bilingual dictionaries during some exams (e.g. in France) or postponing certain exams until students have sufficient language skills to access the whole curriculum (e.g. in Portugal and Slovenia). While preparing non-native students for regular assessments and supporting their participation in general, many education systems offer additional language classes (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2).

In **Cyprus**, Greek is taught as a second language to children from migrant backgrounds; the teaching is implemented via several programmes, transitional classes (in lower and upper secondary schools), classes of Greek as a second language and programmes for unaccompanied minors. All students attending these programmes are assessed in Greek as a second language. These tests are different from the tests given to the mainstream classes and are provided to the schools centrally from the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth <sup>(263)</sup>.

In **Latvia**, the National Centre for Education and the Latvian Language Agency provide guidelines, for example on tests for Ukrainian children. The following support measures are provided for them: (1) longer test completion time, (2) possibility to use dictionaries and (3) translated versions of tests can be used in mathematics. In addition, the students may be exempted from the tests if they plan to continue their studies in the Ukrainian education system. If the national tests in the 9th or 12th grade in the 2022/2023 school year are not passed, but the student will not return to the Ukrainian education system, then the student can retake them <sup>(264)</sup>.

Because **Malta** is a bilingual country, all students are taught Maltese and English at school, with both languages carrying equal status. Non-Maltese students are provided with the option to sit for the subject ‘Maltese as a foreign language’ instead of ‘Maltese language’. Specific examinations are set to assess this specific subject <sup>(265)</sup>.

<sup>(261)</sup> See [https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MVI/Dokumenti/lzobrazevanje-otrok-s-posebnimi-potrebami/OS/Navodila\\_9-letna\\_OS.pdf](https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MVI/Dokumenti/lzobrazevanje-otrok-s-posebnimi-potrebami/OS/Navodila_9-letna_OS.pdf) and [https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MVI/Dokumenti/lzobrazevanje-otrok-s-posebnimi-potrebami/SS/Navodila\\_gimnazijski\\_program.pdf](https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MVI/Dokumenti/lzobrazevanje-otrok-s-posebnimi-potrebami/SS/Navodila_gimnazijski_program.pdf).

<sup>(262)</sup> See <http://www.prosvasimo.iep.edu.gr/docs/pdf/KI/%CE%9F%CE%94%CE%97%CE%93%CE%9F%CE%A3%20%CE%95%CE%9A%CE%A0%CE%91%CE%99%CE%94%CE%95%CE%A5%CE%A4%CE%99%CE%9A%CE%9F%CE%A5%20%CE%9A%CE%99.pdf>.

<sup>(263)</sup> See [https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2546&Itemid=463&lang=el](https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2546&Itemid=463&lang=el).

<sup>(264)</sup> See <https://valoda.lv/informacija-par-latviesu-valodas-apguvi-ukrainu-berniem-un-pieaugusajiem>.

<sup>(265)</sup> See <https://www.schoolslearningoutcomes.edu.mt/en/dashboard>.

### 5.3. Summary

All European education systems aim to teach children and young people essential values and competences related to diversity and inclusion by explicitly considering this in the content of top-level school curricula. Although this is not a new effort, the challenges evolve and persist. Nearly half of the education systems have thus recently revised their curricula to further strengthen diversity and inclusion in their curricula.

Curricula address principles of diversity and inclusion slightly more frequently in primary and lower secondary education and a bit less often in upper secondary education. They are most often promoted through the general aims of the curriculum and through different subjects, such as citizenship or civic education, social sciences, ethics, philosophy, moral education and religion, history, foreign languages and geography, but also as part of cross-curricular areas and objectives, such as intercultural education. Finally, fewer than half of the education systems report home-language teaching as a means to support the inclusion of students whose mother tongue is different from the language of schooling.

Regarding the specific groups of learners targeted by curricula addressing diversity and inclusion, half of the education systems report that these topics are treated without explicitly targeting any particular group of learners. Still, in more than one third of the education systems, a focus is on students with special educational needs or disabilities and ethnic minority students. Other student groups targeted by curricula addressing diversity and inclusion are migrant and refugee students, girls/boys and, to a lesser extent, students from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background and religious minority students. The least mentioned target group is LGBTIQ+ students.

It is, moreover, acknowledged as essential to inclusive education to allow teachers to adapt contents, pedagogical approaches and assessments to different student characteristics and needs. Some education systems report measures to increase the flexibility of their curricula to adapt to the individual needs of their learners or to their social and geographical contexts.

In terms of curriculum content, the data show that the topic of preventing prejudice and discrimination has been most frequently addressed in recent curriculum revisions; however, all other topics, addressing human rights, representing diverse identities, combating stereotypes and awareness-raising of exclusion, bullying and/or violence, have been nearly as frequently considered in recent reforms. Tackling misrepresentation or non-representation of minorities/groups and promoting inclusive language are relatively less frequently reported as topics in existing and recently reformed curricula.

Promoting diversity and inclusion in school curricula goes hand in hand with adapting assessment systems and practices. Most European education systems indicate that their general guidelines on both formative and summative assessments refer to the need to adapt assessments to the needs of different learners. Indeed, the function of student assessment is to give feedback both on individual progress and on support needs, and it is intended to pursue the objectives of both equal treatment and equal opportunities.

In terms of specific adaptations of student assessments, the two most common ones across Europe are related to adaptations to the needs of learners with special educational needs or disabilities and accommodating language barriers for non-native speakers. Most education systems report regulations specifying adaptations of assessments for students with special educational needs. They relate to the time and organisation, the format, the use of technical aids, etc. More than half of the education systems also report that their student assessments accommodate language barriers for migrant and/or refugee students. These accommodations may consist of considering the command of the language of schooling in general; assessing the language of schooling as a second language; exempting students from assessments in some subjects or postponing exams; and allowing the use of aids, such as dictionaries.

## Chapter 6: Promoting targeted learning and social-emotional support

As the previous chapter showed, curriculum and assessment methods matter for promoting diversity and inclusion. They can promote students' understanding and competences related to diversity and inclusion, which, in turn, helps to fight prejudice and discrimination at the school level and in society at large. Moreover, inclusive education in itself can help students develop their potential through a focus on their particular learning and development needs.

Apart from continuous student assessments (discussed in Chapter 5), other forms of diagnostic assessments can be carried out, either by schools/teachers or external services, to evaluate students' particular learning needs and the social-emotional challenges they may experience. The results of these assessments can then feed into the planning of instructional strategies, resources and remedial or specialist interventions that can help students overcome challenges (OECD, 2023).

This chapter first investigates the existence of specific guidelines and/or tools that have been developed or that are promoted by top-level education authorities in Europe to support schools in the identification of students' learning and social-emotional difficulties and needs. The second part of the chapter presents education systems' top-level policies and measures aiming to ensure targeted learning and social-emotional support for students who are experiencing difficulties.

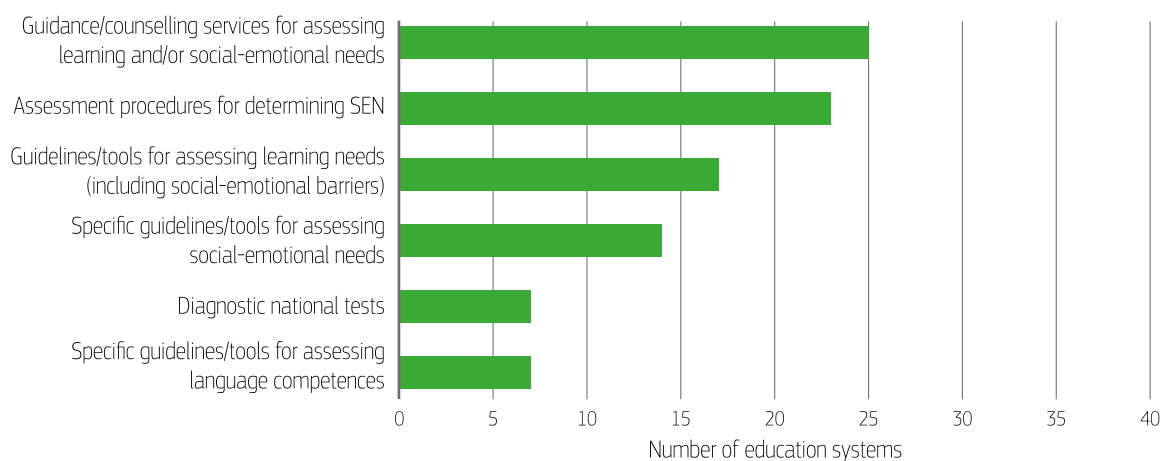
### 6.1. Identifying students' learning and social-emotional support needs

School teachers are usually responsible for identifying students' learning difficulties and needs, and they may also recognise a student's need for social-emotional support. To assist teachers in this process, top-level authorities in nearly all European education systems provide some specific guidelines or tools that can be used in addition to the continuous (formative and summative) student assessments generally applied in schools.

Figure 6.1 presents the main top-level policies and measures promoted across Europe to support schools and teachers in determining students' learning and social-emotional barriers and support needs. The figure presents the number of European education systems stating that they have at least one corresponding policy or measure. As a matter of fact, some education systems reported several relevant policies or measures, even within each of the listed categories.

As it is difficult to ensure that assessments are fully inclusive, that is, sensitive to the needs of particular groups of students (such as non-native speakers or students with special educational needs) and free from any (conscious or unconscious) bias related, for example, to any previous knowledge of student characteristics, a more equitable approach is indeed to gather different data through multiple assessment forms and methods (OECD, 2023).

**Figure 6.1: Top-level policies and measures on identifying students' learning- and social-emotional support needs, 2022/2023**



### Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting at least one of the listed top-level policies or measures (in descending order). A country-specific overview can be found in the annex (Table 6.1A).

The most frequently reported top-level policies and measures (by over half of the education systems) aim to ensure the availability of **guidance and/or counselling services** to oversee the assessment of students' learning and social-emotional support needs. These services or teams of professionals usually consist of guidance counsellors, psychologists, speech therapists, special educational needs specialists and other specialists, such as Roma assistants (e.g. in Slovenia <sup>(266)</sup>). They work either within or outside schools and in close cooperation with teachers, students and parents; their main tasks include identifying and addressing students' learning difficulties and disadvantages, addressing their special educational needs, looking after their social-emotional well-being and addressing family issues and behavioural concerns. In addition to supporting the personal, academic, psychological, social and career development of students, these services or teams are sometimes tasked with addressing specific issues, including intolerance and bullying (e.g. in Slovakia <sup>(267)</sup>); social inclusion of students from different cultural backgrounds (e.g. in Czechia <sup>(268)</sup>); and violence, abuse or neglect (e.g. in Serbia <sup>(269)</sup>).

In Ireland, for example, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) <sup>(270)</sup> works with both primary and post-primary schools and is concerned with learning, behaviour and social and emotional development. The service acts in partnership with teachers, parents and children to identify educational needs and to support the well-being and academic, social and emotional development of all learners. It offers a range of services aimed at meeting these needs, for example supporting individual students (through consultation and assessment), special projects and research.

NEPS may become involved and provide consultation in relation to appropriate interventions to be delivered in the school setting and engage in direct work with an individual student as appropriate. In addition to casework, NEPS psychologists work with teachers to build their capacity. NEPS teams offer training and guidance for teachers in the provision of universal and targeted evidence-informed approaches and

early intervention to promote children's well-being and social, emotional and academic development. Initiatives such as the incredible years programme <sup>(271)</sup> and the friends programme <sup>(272)</sup> have been welcomed by schools and their impact positively evaluated.

The second most widely reported type of policy or measure concerns **assessment procedures for determining students' special educational needs**. Official documents in this area generally establish the responsibility of education institutions, as well as the procedures for identifying special educational needs and providing support measures in accordance with needs (see also Chapter 4, Section 4.1). The procedures may include a pedagogical, physical and psychological evaluation of students, if necessary, in cooperation with specialists of other fields and involving additional assessments. Most policies emphasise the need for early diagnosis of special needs and planning and provision of early intervention.

In Italy, Interministerial Decree No 182/2020 <sup>(273)</sup> defines the procedures for the identification and allocation of support measures for students with disabilities, and the individualised educational plan models to be adopted by educational institutions. The individualised educational plan describes the interventions planned for students with disabilities in a given period. Teachers, support teachers and the class council, in collaboration with parents and specific professionals in and outside the school, jointly draw up and approve the plan with the support of the multidisciplinary evaluation unit. The plan mainly sets out tools and strategies to create a learning environment based on relationships, socialisation, communication, guidance and autonomy. It also indicates teaching and assessment methods according to individual needs. Each school, as part of the definition of the 3-year educational offer plan, draws up an inclusion plan establishing the use of resources, including overcoming architectural barriers and identifying facilitators. In each school there is a working group for inclusion, made up of teachers, support teachers, administrative staff and specialists of the local health authority. The working group for inclusion, chaired by the school head, supports the teachers' council in the definition and implementation of the inclusion plan and teachers' and class councils in the implementation of the individualised educational plans.

<sup>(266)</sup> See <http://pisisr.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV7973>.

<sup>(267)</sup> See <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/16073.pdf>.

<sup>(268)</sup> See <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2005-72>.

<sup>(269)</sup> See [https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi\\_download/zakon\\_o\\_osnovama\\_sistema\\_obrazovanja\\_i\\_vaspitanja.pdf](https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi_download/zakon_o_osnovama_sistema_obrazovanja_i_vaspitanja.pdf).

<sup>(270)</sup> See <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/5ef45c-neps>.

<sup>(271)</sup> See <https://assets.gov.ie/41215/90a7cb8701ab475cada4a20860dbc73.pdf>.

<sup>(272)</sup> See <https://assets.gov.ie/41216/fc1f9f7ae6df4749924eea240b9f3b98.pdf>.

<sup>(273)</sup> See <https://www.istruzione.it/inclusione-e-nuovo-pei/decreto-interministeriale.html>.

Slightly more than one third of the education systems report that education authorities provide specific **guidelines and/or tools for assessing students' learning needs** to support schools or teachers in these tasks. As academic performance and development is closely related to students' social-emotional well-being, the guidelines and tools often consider this dimension also. In some education systems, there are guidelines/tools focusing specifically on the assessment of children at the start of school (e.g. in Poland <sup>(274)</sup>), whereas, in others, they are intended for students who experience barriers to learning or inclusion at any point during their school education. In several education systems, the tools are specifically dedicated to the early identification and prevention of ELET (e.g. in Hungary <sup>(275)</sup> and Romania <sup>(276)</sup>).

In **Cyprus**, the policies and procedures of the Educational Psychology Service of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth help identify the learning needs of students. All schools are aware that, if a child faces barriers that hinder learning and functional development, they need to follow the 'mechanism for the identification and support of children with learning, emotional and other problems' <sup>(277)</sup>, which is a national tool for supporting students. Through the mechanism, as soon as a child is identified as needing help, the parents are informed and engage with the school to address the student's learning needs. Systemic goals are set, and each party works towards them. Progress is systematically monitored and, if necessary, the educational psychologists intervene and advise more intensely. A significant part of the process is the student's psychological assessment. If a child meets the diagnostic criteria for a learning disorder, the case is then referred to the District Committee of Special Education of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, which advises on further measures to respond to the student's needs.

Apart from the abovementioned guidelines and/or tools for assessing students' learning needs, including their psychosocial well-being, slightly less than one third of the education systems report having top-level **guidelines or tools focusing on students' social-emotional needs** specifically. These guidelines generally emphasise the importance of students' well-being and highlight approaches to identify students' needs. They are mainly aimed at teachers and educators, but are also available to employees

of guidance and counselling centres. Most reported guidelines/tools address the social-emotional needs of all students (e.g. in Spain; see the country example below), whereas others are focused on specific groups, such as learners from Ukraine (e.g. in Italy <sup>(278)</sup> and Portugal <sup>(279)</sup>).

In Finland, in addition to materials aiming to help schools identify and address emotional, social and behavioural challenges in children and adolescents in schools, a school health promotion study <sup>(280)</sup> is carried out nationwide every second year to monitor the well-being, health and schoolwork of Finnish children and adolescents. The aim of the study is to strengthen the planning and evaluation of health promotion activities at the school, municipal and national levels.

In **Spain**, the increase in mental health challenges derived from the health crisis caused by COVID-19 has demanded focused attention on children and teenagers. The emotional well-being programme in the field of education <sup>(281)</sup> has been designed in line with the national mental health strategy. The objective is to support the emotional well-being and mental health needs of students from the perspective of educational intervention. The target groups are students of the last cycle of primary education and compulsory secondary education, baccalaureate students and students in basic and intermediate vocational training. The programmes' objectives are to:

- promote specific training in emotional well-being and mental health among teachers that contributes to the early detection of cases, thereby creating a positive and safe school environment;
- promote training that contributes to an intervention based on good treatment in childhood and adolescence and respect for the fundamental rights of children and adolescents;
- facilitate teachers' knowledge of the active referral protocols for students in need of mental health care services;
- spread information on good practices that promote the emotional well-being of students and monitor mental health cases;
- promote actions to raise awareness of and prevent ICT abuse in childhood and adolescence and addictive behaviours with and without substances;

<sup>(274)</sup> See <https://mwm.us.edu.pl>.

<sup>(275)</sup> See [https://www.oktatas.hu/koznevels/vegzettseg\\_nelkuli\\_iskolaelhagyas](https://www.oktatas.hu/koznevels/vegzettseg_nelkuli_iskolaelhagyas).

<sup>(276)</sup> See <https://www.edu.ro/PNRAS>.

<sup>(277)</sup> See [http://www.moec.gov.cy/edu\\_psychology/entypa.html](http://www.moec.gov.cy/edu_psychology/entypa.html).

<sup>(278)</sup> See <https://www.istruzione.it/emergenza-educativa-ucraina/documenti.html>.

<sup>(279)</sup> See <https://www.dge.mec.pt/noticias/literacia-em-saude-psicologica-e-bem-estar-no-contexto-da-resposta-das-escolas-portuguesas>.

<sup>(280)</sup> See <https://thl.fi/en/web/thlfi-en/research-and-development/research-and-projects/school-health-promotion-study>.

<sup>(281)</sup> See [https://www.boe.es/diario\\_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2022-21790](https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2022-21790).

- promote connections between professionals from schools, health centres and local groups that support children and young people;
- prepare and disseminate materials and instruments on emotional well-being and mental health;
- increase human resources in the field of promoting the emotional well-being and mental health of students.

Some education systems report **diagnostic national tests** as a measure promoted by top-level education authorities to evaluate individual students' learning needs. The national tests are carried out in primary education (in Cyprus) or primary and secondary education (in the French Community of Belgium, Italy, Hungary and Norway) to support schools in the identification of students' learning difficulties and needs. In Ireland, although there is no requirement for annual assessment, a range of diagnostic tests to evaluate individual students' learning needs are available to primary and post-primary schools to help teachers prepare individual education plans and set suitable targets in line with students' needs. The national test in Hungary also examines the impact of a student's sociocultural background and how schools address existing disadvantages (see the country example below).

The **Hungarian** national assessment of basic competences, a national, centrally organised testing system for mathematic and reading competences and performance in foreign languages, is designed to test every student in every basic school at grades 6, 8 and 10 annually. The assessment is organised by the educational authority, which prepares the tests and questionnaires and processes and publishes the results. The assessment is supplemented by a family background index on the sociocultural background of students. In addition, since 2010, it is possible to monitor the progress of individual students and, in this way, examine the impact of a school compensating social disadvantages. Systemic assistance is being provided for low-performing schools on an ongoing basis. Learning outcomes based on the preceding 3 years' national basic competence assessments and demands for methodological assistance are also examined by the educational authority. If 50 % of students in grades 6, 8 and 10 in school have not achieved minimum requirements in reading and maths, the school head is obligated to prepare a comprehensive action plan to improve learning outcomes. The schools are also obligated to take professional, methodological assistance from pedagogical assistance services in order to eliminate low achievement, improve school performance and prevent drop-out.

Finally, some education systems, such as those in Czechia<sup>(282)</sup>, Germany (see the country example below) and Austria<sup>(283)</sup>, report **specific guidelines or tools to assess a student's language competence**<sup>(284)</sup>. These measures mainly aim to identify students who, due to insufficient skills in the language of schooling, cannot follow instruction and would therefore benefit from additional language support.

As part of the measures to improve language competence in early childhood, there are now a large number of important and established observation and documentation procedures in the **German Länder** to determine the level of language competence before school enrolment and, if necessary, subsequent language support measures<sup>(285)</sup>. These and other measures are designed particularly to support children and young people from migrant backgrounds and children with deficits in language development and to compensate for social disadvantages. In recent years, almost all *Länder* have introduced procedures for language status observation and assessment and, in some cases, have established obligatory language promotion measures.

## 6.2. Providing targeted learning and social-emotional support

Following the identification of challenges that students may experience in their learning or social-emotional development, different support measures may be required. Schools and teachers are usually at the forefront when it comes to offering any initial support. However, in some cases, more substantial interventions might be needed.

Education authorities can provide policies or measures to facilitate the provision of the required learning and social-emotional support to students in schools. These policies or measures can be universal in the sense that they support interventions that are available to all students who need it, or they can be targeted support interventions that consider the challenges and needs of specific groups of students.

<sup>(282)</sup> See <https://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/zakladni-vzdelavani/kurikulum-cestiny-jako-druheho-jazyka>.

<sup>(283)</sup> See [https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/ba/sprabi/mika\\_d.html](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/ba/sprabi/mika_d.html) and [https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/ba/sprabi/usb\\_daz.html](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/ba/sprabi/usb_daz.html).

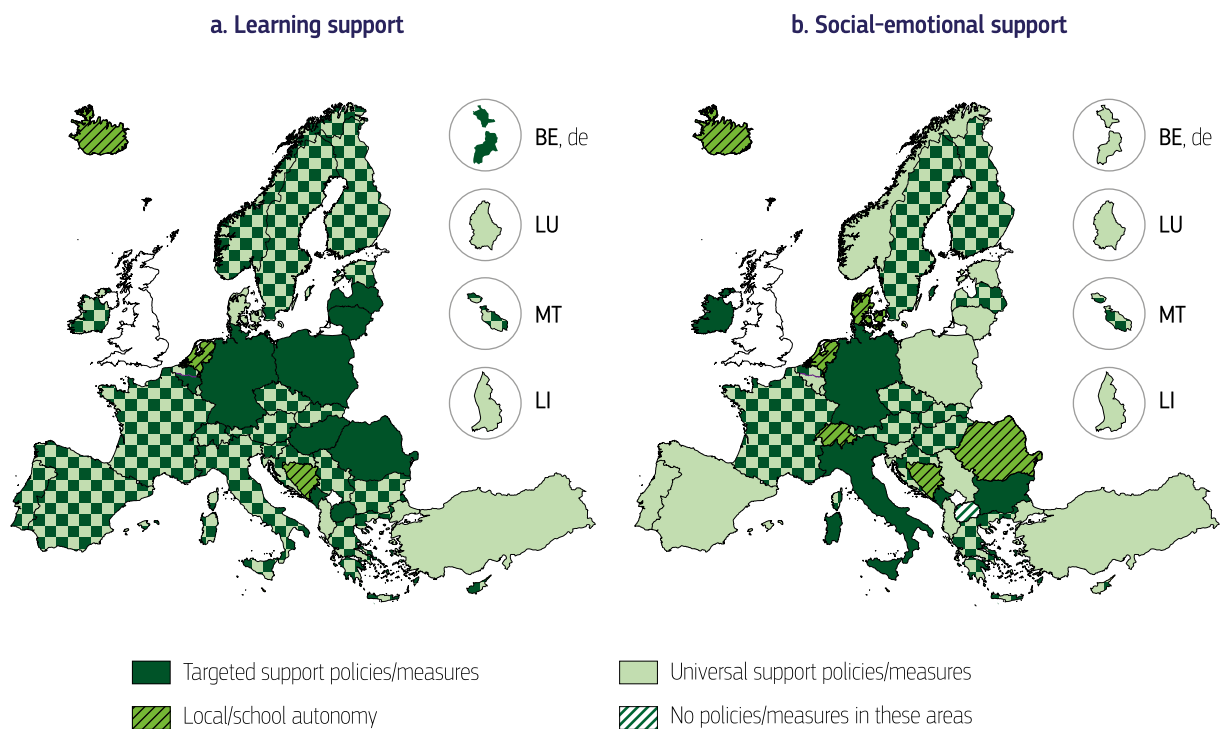
<sup>(284)</sup> For more information about policies and measures on diagnostic tests of the language of schooling, see the 2023 edition of the Eurydice report *Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe* (<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/key-data-teaching-languages-school-europe-2023-edition>).

<sup>(285)</sup> See, for example, *Diagnostic standards for schools in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern* ([https://www.bildung-mv.de/export/sites/bildungsserver/downloads/lehrer/Handbuch\\_Standards\\_der\\_Diagnostik\\_Webfassung.pdf](https://www.bildung-mv.de/export/sites/bildungsserver/downloads/lehrer/Handbuch_Standards_der_Diagnostik_Webfassung.pdf)).

Figure 6.2 presents the top-level policies and measures that are intended to assist schools and teachers in providing students with learning and social-emotional support, respectively. Most European education systems report having policies and measures in both areas. However, when comparing the areas, it appears that, in terms of learning support, more education systems report both universal and targeted policies or measures, whereas, in the area of social-emotional support, more education systems report either universal or targeted policies or measures.

Of course, this does not mean that other forms of support are not available in the countries in practice; schools and teachers play a crucial role in helping students overcome different kinds of difficulties in school, even in the absence of top-level policies or measures. However, what can be noted is that, where policies or measures have been reported, they relate a bit more frequently to learning support, and in particular targeted learning support, whereas targeted policies or measures on social-emotional support tend to be less widespread.

**Figure 6.2: Top-level policies and measures on universal and targeted learning and social-emotional support, 2022/2023**



Source: Eurydice.

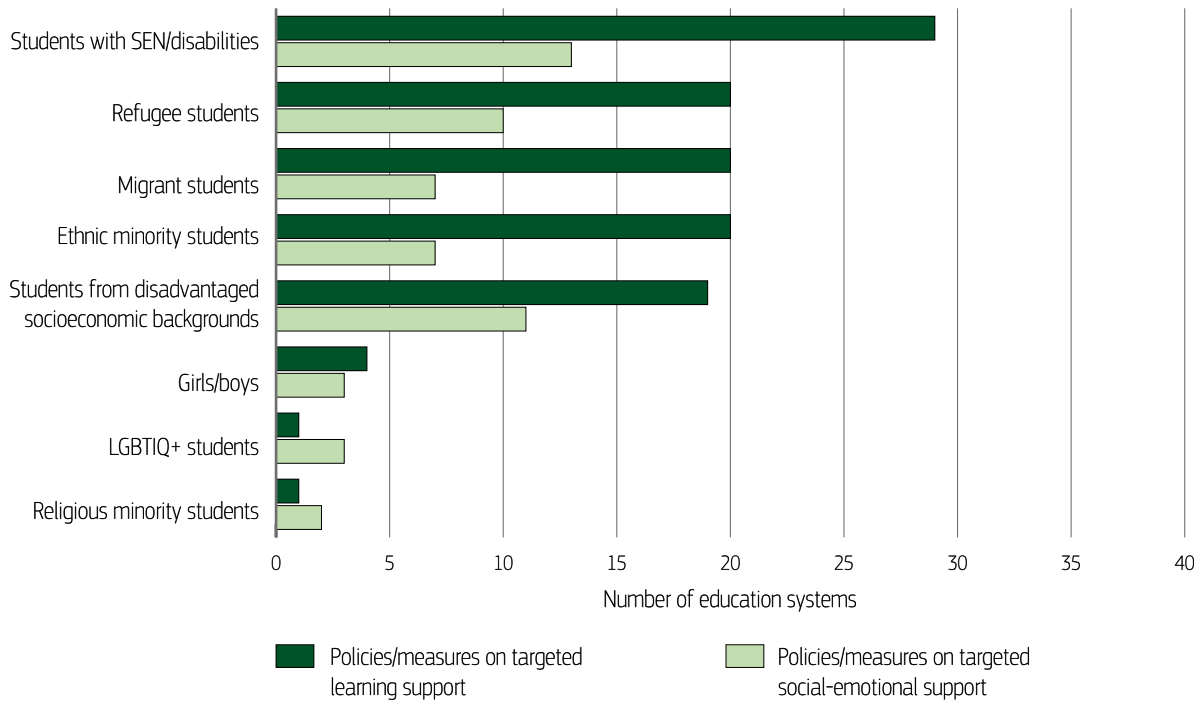
### Explanatory note

Universal support policies or measures refer to interventions that are available to all students who need it, whereas targeted support policies or measures refer to specific efforts to provide additional support to particular groups of students who are disadvantaged and/or at risk of discrimination.

The question that follows is which groups of students are addressed by the targeted top-level policies and measures on learning and social-emotional support. This is presented in Figure 6.3. It shows that most policies and measures aim to ensure targeted learning support for students with special educational needs or disabilities, followed by support for refugee, migrant and ethnic minority students and then those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Targeted policies and measures promoting learning or social-emotional support for girls/boys, LGBTIQ+ or religious minority students are reported by a small minority of education systems.



**Figure 6.3: Student groups addressed by targeted top-level policies and measures on learning and social-emotional support, 2022/2023**



Source: Eurydice

### Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting top-level policies or measures on learning and social-emotional support targeting particular groups of students who are disadvantaged and/or at risk of discrimination (in descending order, according to the policies/measures on targeted learning support). A country-specific overview can be found in the annex (Table 6.3A).

The most frequently reported top-level policies and measures on learning support target **students with special educational needs or disabilities**. They mainly aim to ensure that the students receive the needed assistance to learn and develop their abilities within mainstream education in accordance with the general objectives. The support measures include regulations of the organisation, content, evaluation, forms and methods of education and school services; the use of compensatory aids, special textbooks, teaching aids and the use of alternative communication systems; adjustments of the conditions of admission to and completion of education, including the expected learning outcomes; education according to an individual education plan, the use of teaching assistants and other pedagogical support staff; and special education services, guidance and counselling assistance (see also Chapter 4). In the area of social-emotional support, policies and measures generally aim to ensure psychological and special pedagogical

interventions provided by specialised professionals in schools or by dedicated centres to assist with students' academic, cognitive, linguistic, sensory and psychomotor, emotional and social development.

The guidelines for working with students with disabilities<sup>(286)</sup>, issued in 2021 in Croatia, are a framework for planning, implementing and evaluating the educational progress of students with disabilities. They are addressed to school heads, teachers and other educational staff of primary and secondary schools that implement regular teaching programmes/curricula. The guidelines include instructions on identifying students with developmental disabilities, assessing their educational and social needs and educational plan and implementing and evaluating the teaching and learning process. The guidelines also describe the roles of different participants in the educational processes. They provide school heads, teachers and other educational staff with information about the essential components of an individualised curriculum, and refer them to additional learning resources, while respecting the schools' and teachers' autonomy in the process of educating students. It is expected that the implementation of the guidelines in educational practice contributes to a higher level of quality

<sup>(286)</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3W1eX5G>.

inclusive education as they enable a common and consistent application of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the strategy of education, science and technology and other regulations that provide a framework for inclusive education in the Republic of Croatia.

Around half of the European education systems report targeting their top-level policies and measures on learning support for **refugee and migrant students**. These policies and measures mainly aim to ensure that newly arrived students are provided with structured language support to promote their academic and social inclusion. A number of education systems falling into this category – such as Czechia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Latvia, Austria, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia – have issued recent policies or guidelines focusing on the provision of support measures for students from Ukraine. These top-level initiatives aim to ensure, among other things, the availability of financial and human resources, information and teaching materials to assist with the inclusion of these learners in schools. The learning support policies and measures targeting students from Ukraine also often address their social-emotional support needs.

In **Czechia**, the new lex Ukraine law (valid until 31 August 2023) regulates the conditions of education of foreigners who have been granted temporary protection in connection with the military aggression in Ukraine. The law facilitates the admission of children and students from Ukraine to Czech schools, regulates their placement in classes, allows for the adjustment of the curriculum and educational content etc. In addition to this legislative amendment, there is extensive financial and methodological support from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and other top-level institutions, with the aim of helping schools manage the arrival of Ukrainian children and students in the Czech educational system, their integration and the sustainable education of mixed groups of Czech and Ukrainian children and students. The emphasis is mainly on the teaching of the Czech language as a second language, on working with children and students with a different mother tongue, on providing them with psychosocial support and on individualisation and differentiation of education for both Ukrainian students and all other learners in schools. As part of this support, assistance is provided in the form of free language training in nursery, primary and secondary schools; adaptation groups for Ukrainian students; employment of Ukrainian assistants (providing direct support of students for the purpose of successful integration); bilingual

assistants (support for students with a different mother tongue); and school assistants and social pedagogues (prevention of school failure). An overview of all measures in the field of education and a portal of methodical assistance regarding the integration of Ukrainian children and students are available online <sup>(287)</sup>.

Equally frequently reported top-level interventions promoting learning and social-emotional support target **ethnic minority students**. In most cases, these initiatives focus on Roma students, and their main objective is to provide the necessary support to reduce the number of Roma students who leave education and training early, who do not complete compulsory education or do not continue with general secondary education. Concrete initiatives, for example in Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Montenegro and North Macedonia, enable schools to employ Roma assistants or mediators to help learners overcome learning, language or emotional difficulties. Through a recent policy initiative in Spain <sup>(288)</sup>, specific courses are offered to teachers and teaching materials are provided to present Roma history and culture. The aim is to contribute to eradicating prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma students that can hinder their educational and social advancement. In Finland and Sweden, top-level policies promote tuition in the mother tongue of ethnic and/or national minority students (see also Chapter 5, Sections 5.1.2 and 5.2).

In **Latvia**, Roma students are supported by the State Education Quality Service project 'Support for reducing early school leaving' <sup>(289)</sup>. The project provides, through local governments, individual support for learners who are at risk of early school leaving due, for example, to a lack of financial resources. The support may thus include covering expenses for transport, meals, dormitories, etc. However, the main focus of the project is not on the provision of temporary financial assistance, but on the creation of sustainable comprehensive mechanisms that create a supportive and inclusive environment for every learner. Thus, the project aims to ensure cooperation between the municipality, schools, educators and parents in order to identify early on Roma students who are at risk of dropping out of school, to provide them with individual learning support and to promote the availability of Roma mediators and teacher assistants in schools attended by a large number of Roma children. Through this project, Roma students are receiving not only academic support,

<sup>(287)</sup> See <https://www.edu.cz/ukrajina/hlavni-informace-msmt>.

<sup>(288)</sup> See <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/prensa/actualidad/2022/02/20220203-materialespueblogitano.html>.

<sup>(289)</sup> See <http://www.pumpurs.lv/lv/par-projektu>.

but also socio-emotional support and guidance. This was especially provided during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also continues to be offered currently <sup>(290)</sup>.

Top-level policies or measures on learning and social-emotional support targeting **students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds** are also frequently reported. Policies or measures in this area mainly aim to provide financial resources either directly to the learners (e.g. for transport or meals, via scholarships or allowances) or to schools with a high concentration of students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds to fulfil their educational needs (see also Chapter 4, Section 4.3). In the area of social-emotional support, policies in some education systems, such as in Greece, ensure the possibility to appoint psychologists and social workers in school units with programmes for socially disadvantaged groups of students.

In **Finland**, a special state subsidy – positive discrimination funding, also called equality funding – for primary and lower secondary education is recorded in the act on the financing of educational and cultural provision and entered into force at the beginning of 2023 <sup>(291)</sup>. The positive discrimination funding is targeted at schools and early childhood education institutions located in regions where the following characteristics are high: the share of the population with a low level of education, the unemployment rate and/or the proportion of the population that speak a foreign language as their first language. The aim of the special funding is to strengthen educational equality and reduce inequalities in learning. According to research, positive discrimination funding has a positive effect on the progress of students' studies. It increases the effectiveness and predictability of the grant so that equality measures are better and more systematically planned and established at the local level.

Policies and measures on learning and social-emotional support targeting **girls or boys** are reported in the Flemish Community of Belgium <sup>(292)</sup>, France, Italy <sup>(293)</sup> and Malta <sup>(294)</sup> only. In France, various

initiatives in the area of learning support aim to strengthen girls' interest in science and fight against discrimination and self-censorship. The website *Les filles, faites des sciences* ('Girls, do science') <sup>(295)</sup> presents different actions to support girls with scientific studies in school and encourage them towards careers in science. Top-level measures in France in the area of social-emotional support aim to prevent gender-based violence and discrimination <sup>(296)</sup>.

France is one of the few countries reporting a top-level initiative promoting social-emotional support for **LGBTIQ+ students** (see the country example below).

The **French Ministry of National Education** is committed to the fight against all forms of discrimination and violence, including those of a homophobic or transphobic nature. To this end, a series of measures have been developed, targeting students and school staff, to help them find services and resources aiming to prevent, understand, listen and support <sup>(297)</sup>. The measures include free telephone hotlines to listen to and help students experiencing homophobic bullying; a national campaign aimed at informing and raising awareness among students and all members of the educational community about homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination; guidance for the prevention of homophobia and transphobia in schools; and a guideline to help educational staff better understand and identify the signs of a lack of well-being among students and to take steps in consultation with and under the coordination of school heads towards a positive school climate.

Similarly, Malta reported a national law related to learning support for LGBTIQ+ students and for **religious minority students** <sup>(298)</sup>. According to this law, all learners should have access to quality instruction, intervention and support, regardless of religion and belief or sexual orientation, among other characteristics.

<sup>(290)</sup> See <http://www.pumpurs.lv/lv/bemus-nedrikst-pazaudet-ir-jaturpina-sniegt-atbalsts>.

<sup>(291)</sup> See [https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/HallituksenEsitys/Sivut/HE\\_55+2022.aspx](https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/HallituksenEsitys/Sivut/HE_55+2022.aspx).

<sup>(292)</sup> See <https://www.onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/2021-07/Aanbevelingen%20voor%20het%20STEM-actieplan%202020-2030.pdf>.

<sup>(293)</sup> See <https://www.noisiamopari.it/site/it/home-page/>.

<sup>(294)</sup> See <https://education.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/booklet-esm-2014-2024-eng-19-02.pdf>.

<sup>(295)</sup> See <https://eduscol.education.fr/2565/les-filles-faites-des-sciences#:~:text=L'accompagnement%20C3%A0%20l'orientation,-L'accompagnement%20C3%A0&text=au%20coll%C3%A8ge%20%3A%2012%20heures%20annuelles,265%20heures%20sur%20trois%20ann%C3%A9es>.

<sup>(296)</sup> See <https://eduscol.education.fr/1629/egalite-filles-garcons-et-prevention-des-violences-sexistes-et-sexuelles>.

<sup>(297)</sup> See <https://www.education.gouv.fr/contre-l-homophobie-et-la-transphobie-l-ecole-40706#:~:text=Flyer%20LGBT%20lyc%C3%A9e- ,Les%20associations%20partenaires%20pour%20lutter%20contre%20l'homophobie,%C3%A9cole%20et%20d'%C3%A9tablissement>.

<sup>(298)</sup> See <https://educationservices.gov.mt/en/NSSS/Documents/Policy%20on%20Inclusive%20Education%20in%20Schools.pdf>.

### 6.3. Summary

Education authorities can play an important role in supporting schools and teachers to assess and overcome students' learning barriers and social-emotional challenges. In nearly all European education systems, top-level authorities have issued policies and measures to facilitate the identification of students' learning and social-emotional support needs. Most of these initiatives ensure the availability of guidance and/or counselling services that either work in schools or in close cooperation with schools and are tasked with evaluating (and addressing) students' learning difficulties and disadvantages, any behavioural, social-emotional or family problems, etc. Policies or measures that are related to procedures for determining students' special education needs are also very widespread; they include pedagogical, physical and psychological evaluations of students.

Slightly more than one third of the education systems report that education authorities provide specific guidelines and/or tools that can be used by schools and teachers for assessing students' learning and social-emotional needs, respectively. The former includes, for example, guidelines/tools for the early identification of students' learning difficulties or the prevention of drop-out; the latter are mainly guidelines/tools aiming to assess and promote the well-being of all students, or sometimes specific groups, such as learners from Ukraine. Some education systems also report, in this context, diagnostic national tests to assess the learning needs of individual students and guidelines or tools to identify students who need language support.

National or top-level policies and measures can, moreover, facilitate the actual provision of learning and social-emotional support to students in schools. Most education systems report having policies and measures promoting learning support, and in particular targeted support interventions for specific groups of at-risk students. Policies or measures on social-emotional support are also widely reported; however, they tend to be more universal (i.e. intended for all students), rather than targeted to the needs of specific student groups.

Overall, most targeted learning and/or social-emotional support policies and measures are focused on students with special educational needs or disabilities. This is followed by policies and measures targeting refugee, migrant and ethnic minority students (especially Roma students), and then students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Only a few education systems report top-level policies and measures on learning and/or social-emotional support targeting girls or boys, and even fewer education systems report relevant policies targeting LGBTIQ+ or religious minority students.

It should be noted that students who are provided with additional support measures often have several characteristics associated with different learner groups – as was already highlighted by the concept of intersectionality (see Chapter 1). For example, the same learner may have special needs and an ethnic minority background. This underlines the importance of ensuring a comprehensive assessment and a variety of support interventions that address the particular learning and development needs of each learner.

## Chapter 7: Teaching staff and teacher training to promote diversity and inclusion

Teachers play an important role in the implementation of policies promoting diversity and inclusion in education. They can be key actors when it comes to recognising students' learning difficulties and needs, fostering their learning outcomes and strengthening their social-emotional skills and well-being. ITE programmes can help to ensure that teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil these tasks. CPD opportunities are also essential to prepare and support teachers to work with a diverse range of students and implement principles of inclusion in the classroom (UNESCO, 2018).

Increasing the diversity of the teacher workforce can also have positive impacts on learners, especially on those from under-represented groups. Combined with the help of educational support staff, such as teaching assistants or specialist staff, these measures can ensure the provision of learning systems and interventions that help all learners achieve their educational potential (OECD, 2023).

This chapter explores first whether European education systems make systematic efforts to promote the recruitment of teachers from diverse backgrounds in schools. It then looks at how education systems promote the capacity of teachers to foster diversity and inclusion in schools through relevant training. The last section investigates policies and measures aiming to ensure the availability of educational support staff who can assist teachers in their work.

### 7.1. Diversity of teaching staff

Teacher diversity can be beneficial for all students, particularly for those belonging to under-represented and/or disadvantaged groups. A diverse teacher workforce can have positive impacts on learners, as it brings unique perspectives based on teachers' life experiences, cultures and backgrounds, which can be transmitted to students; furthermore, learners can identify with the teachers they are learning from. However, existing country data show a lack of diversity in the teacher workforce in schools, in particular in terms of teachers' sex/gender, ethnicity and culture, special educational needs and sexual orientation (OECD, 2023).

Figure 7.1 presents the European education systems that have top-level policies or measures promoting the recruitment of teachers from diverse backgrounds in schools. The data show that only eight education systems report relevant initiatives.

Most of the **policies and measures promoting teacher diversity** concern specific quotas reserved for people with disabilities in the public sector, including public schools. In Spain, for example, at least seven per cent of vacancies in the public sector must be filled by people with disabilities, provided that candidates with a disability pass the selection processes, present evidence of their disability and show that it is not incompatible with their performance of the role' (<sup>299</sup>). Similar types of policy can be found in Ireland (see the country example below), France (<sup>300</sup>), Croatia (<sup>301</sup>), Cyprus (<sup>302</sup>) and Türkiye (<sup>303</sup>).

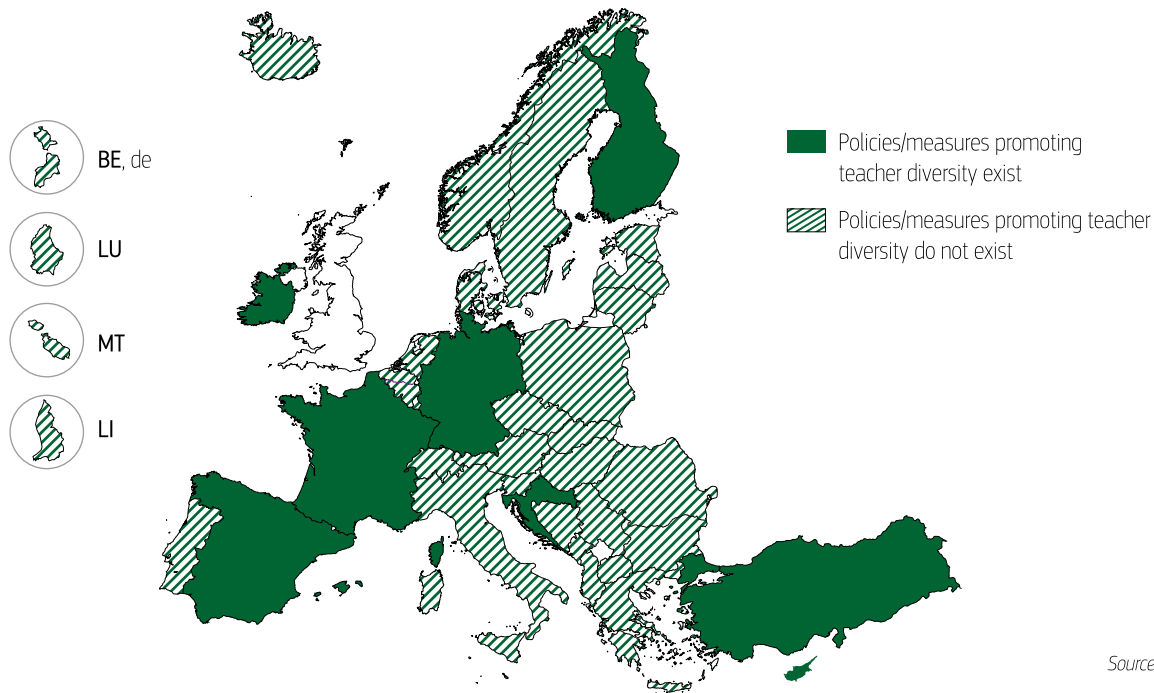
<sup>(299)</sup> See <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=B0E-A-2015-11719#a59>.

<sup>(300)</sup> See [https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/emploi-et-insertion/prevention-maintien-emploi/salarie-travailleur-independant-ou-agent-public/rqth-ou-situation-de-handicap/article/beneficiaire-de-l-obligation-d-emploi-des-travailleurs-handicapes-boeth?TSPD\\_101\\_R0=087dc22938ab2000db4013b4af1d04e2ea4dd08117964f3a65c7f98861668a6e7fb48bb6d624679108504a995b143000d025a672ac8f76c61d0f89b783947952e4ae5750d0a3d9b6ea488d2e9b0bc822f7f51e10eb42f534d5d227b16ec22864](https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/emploi-et-insertion/prevention-maintien-emploi/salarie-travailleur-independant-ou-agent-public/rqth-ou-situation-de-handicap/article/beneficiaire-de-l-obligation-d-emploi-des-travailleurs-handicapes-boeth?TSPD_101_R0=087dc22938ab2000db4013b4af1d04e2ea4dd08117964f3a65c7f98861668a6e7fb48bb6d624679108504a995b143000d025a672ac8f76c61d0f89b783947952e4ae5750d0a3d9b6ea488d2e9b0bc822f7f51e10eb42f534d5d227b16ec22864).

<sup>(301)</sup> See [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2013\\_12\\_157\\_3292.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2013_12_157_3292.html).

<sup>(302)</sup> See [http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2009\\_1\\_146.pdf](http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2009_1_146.pdf).

<sup>(303)</sup> See <https://www.aile.gov.tr/eyhgm/mevzuat/ulusal-mevzuat/kanunlar/devlet-memurlari-kanunu>.

**Figure 7.1: Top-level policies and measures promoting the recruitment of teachers from diverse backgrounds in schools, 2022/2023**

Source: Eurydice

Some of these education systems also have policies promoting the recruitment of teachers from migrant backgrounds. This is the case in Ireland, where such a policy is among a range of measures to increase diversity in the teaching profession (see below); Germany, where the *Länder* are committed to increasing the proportion of teachers and social pedagogues from migrant backgrounds <sup>(304)</sup>; and Finland, where there are measures aiming to improve the access of teachers from migrant backgrounds to Finnish schools, such as the OSU ('Teacher in Finland') project funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture <sup>(305)</sup>.

In France, the Ministry of National Education set up a national action plan for professional equality between women and men in the public sector, which involves the creation of conditions to facilitate access to the job market for both sexes, assessing and addressing differences in gender pay and career gaps and preventing any form of discrimination or acts of violence <sup>(306)</sup>.

In Ireland, one of the goals of the Department of Education's ITE policy is to increase the diversity of the teaching profession, from a range of perspectives. The fourth national access plan for equity and access to higher education (for 2022–2028) was recently approved <sup>(307)</sup>. One of its goals is to work towards a more diverse teacher workforce by supporting equity of access, participation and success in ITE for the priority groups that are under-represented in third-level education – socioeconomically disadvantaged people, members of the Roma/Irish travelling communities, and those with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities.

In addition, the migrant teacher project aims to increase the participation of immigrant internationally educated teachers in Irish primary and post-primary schools. The project was established by the Marino Institute of Education, and it has been co-funded by the Department of Education and the Department of Justice. The project provides information, advice and training to migrant teachers who have qualified outside Ireland, to help them continue their profession in Ireland <sup>(308)</sup>.

<sup>(304)</sup> See [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen\\_beschluesse/2015/2015\\_10\\_08-Darstellung-kultureller-Vielfalt.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2015/2015_10_08-Darstellung-kultureller-Vielfalt.pdf).

<sup>(305)</sup> See <https://www.jamk.fi/en/research-and-development/rdi-projects/osu-opettajaksi-suomeen>.

<sup>(306)</sup> See <https://www.education.gouv.fr/le-ministere-s-engage-pour-l-egalite-professionnelle-9284>.

<sup>(307)</sup> See <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b156c-national-access-plan-2022-to-2028/>.

<sup>(308)</sup> See [https://www.mie.ie/en/study\\_with\\_us/migrant\\_teacher\\_project/](https://www.mie.ie/en/study_with_us/migrant_teacher_project/).

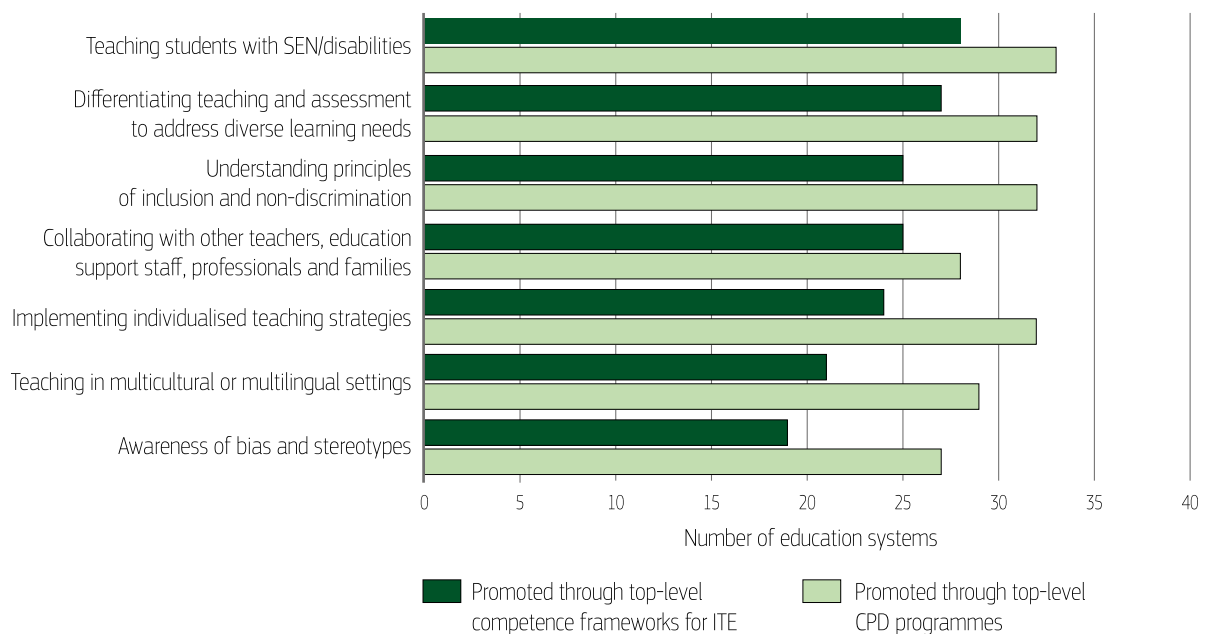
Among those education systems **without top-level policies or measures on teacher diversity**, only the French Community of Belgium, Estonia and Iceland mention some actions by education authorities in this area. The French Community of Belgium and Estonia report, for example, that the gender ratio among teachers is being monitored, although there is no targeted policy to influence the number of places allocated to women or men. Similarly, in Iceland, it is not uncommon for municipalities or school heads to strive to promote diversification of teaching staff, especially in terms of gender and language skills. However, in this case also there are no official measures to regulate the recruitment of teachers from diverse backgrounds to schools.

## 7.2. Teacher education and training on diversity and inclusion

Teacher education and training can prepare and support teachers to respond to increasing diversity in classrooms and to promote inclusive learning approaches. Such education and training need to focus on a range of competences, skills and knowledge that can enable teachers to respond to the different learning and support needs of students and help them achieve their academic potential.

Figure 7.2 presents a selection of relevant teacher competences and shows whether these are promoted through top-level competence frameworks for ITE and/or through CPD programmes that are either provided or supported (e.g. financially) by top-level education authorities. It shows that all analysed competences are widely promoted across Europe, in particular through CPD programmes.

**Figure 7.2: Teacher competences related to diversity and inclusion promoted through top-level competence frameworks for ITE and/or top-level CPD programmes, 2022/2023**



Source: Eurydice

### Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting the promotion of the listed teacher competences through top-level competence frameworks for ITE and/or CPD programmes that are either provided or supported (e.g. financially) by top-level education authorities (in descending order, according to the competences promoted through ITE competence frameworks). A country-specific overview can be found in the annex (Table 7.2A).

It should be noted, however, that the competences addressed through ITE frameworks and/or CPD programmes may be optional training elements. Indeed, the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) data reveal that relatively small proportions of teachers across the participating European countries had attended CPD on some of the topics (within the 12 months preceding the survey), such as approaches to individualised learning (47.3 %), teaching students with special needs (45.8 %), teacher–parent/guardian cooperation (31.7 %) and

teaching in multicultural or multilingual settings (20.0 %) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021). The survey further reveals that the lack of training and preparation in managing an inclusive classroom, especially in primary education, is a great cause of concern for teachers (OECD, 2021). It may thus be worth analysing barriers to participation in relevant training programmes in order to ensure that teachers have the required competences to promote diversity and inclusion in schools.

Among the teacher competences analysed here, the most widely promoted one, through ITE and CPD, is **teaching students with special educational needs or disabilities**. In the context of teacher competence frameworks, this competence generally aims to provide future teachers with the knowledge and skills to offer inclusive education, and to apply adequate methods, in cooperation with other specialists, for the education of students with special educational needs and their participation in school life. CPD programmes promoting competences to instruct students with special educational needs are often more specific, that is, they may focus on specific topics such as the different learning disabilities (e.g. in the French Community of Belgium); spatial orientation and self-care among children with visual impairment (e.g. in Czechia); counselling the families of students with special educational needs (e.g. in Estonia); early detection, intervention and monitoring of special educational needs (e.g. in Spain); or the use of iPads as a powerful tool for students with learning disabilities (e.g. in Austria).

On 14 September 2017, the **Lithuanian** Ministry of Education, Science and Sport approved a new description of the ITE model <sup>(309)</sup>. The model describes teacher education as a continuum that begins with ITE and encompasses regular, continuous professional development activities. Concerning the education of children with special educational needs, all pedagogical study programmes must include a course on the topic 'Diversity of learners, taking into account the context of those with special educational needs (inclusive education) and those who are talented'.

In the area of CPD, a project implemented in **Poland** by the Centre for Education Development entitled 'Learner with special educational needs – development of a training and counselling model' <sup>(310)</sup> aims to develop a model of training and counselling activities for teachers and other educational professionals, which will enable them

to recognise the needs of children and young people and to plan comprehensive support in accordance with the identified individual needs. Currently, training courses for school heads, teachers, representatives of local authorities and pedagogical supervisors in the field of inclusive education are being held all over Poland (in 16 regions). Ultimately, 28,000 persons are to participate in these training courses. The training uses training materials developed through the project. The project is co-financed by the ESF.

Moreover, in 2022, the Polish Ministry of Education and Science launched a two-semester in-service postgraduate course, free of charge to participants, for primary and secondary school teachers teaching in diverse classrooms <sup>(311)</sup>. The studies are implemented at five universities in Poland. Graduates of the master's degree programme will acquire competences in the following areas: practical implementation of the model of inclusive education as quality education for all learners; practical application of educational legislation in the field of organisation and implementation of inclusive education; preparation for working with learners with special educational needs, including the use of the basics of special didactics in the implementation of inclusive education; conducting a functional assessment of the learner in order to identify their resources, planning the support process and preparing a multidisciplinary assessment of the level of functioning of the learner; cooperation with specialists, teachers and parents in the area of psychological–educational support; adaptation of methods and ways of working with a learner with special educational needs, including at different educational stages (adaptation of educational requirements, adaptation of teaching materials, assessment supporting the learning process); working with learners with diverse learning needs and creating conditions for effective learning using the principles of universal design; and applying educational strategies to build a class team conducive to the implementation of inclusive education and the integration of a group of learners with diverse needs and abilities.

Another competence that is relatively widely promoted through ITE and CPD across European education systems concerns the ability of teachers to **differentiate teaching and assessment to address diverse learning needs**. It implies that prospective teachers learn to adapt their didactics to the learning goals and the interests, motivation, situation and needs of diverse learners. In some education systems (e.g. in Germany and Croatia), this teacher competence

<sup>(309)</sup> See <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/685f3fe0992211e78871f4322bb82f27>.

<sup>(310)</sup> See <https://www.ore.edu.pl/2018/06/szkolenia-i-doradztwo-dla-poradni-o-projekcie>.

<sup>(311)</sup> See [http://wse.home.amu.edu.pl/podyplomowe/uczniami\\_o\\_zroznicowanych\\_potrzebach\\_rozwojowych\\_i\\_educacyjnych](http://wse.home.amu.edu.pl/podyplomowe/uczniami_o_zroznicowanych_potrzebach_rozwojowych_i_educacyjnych).



is related, in both ITE and/or CPD programmes, to pedagogical adaptations to the needs of students with special educational needs. But in other cases, it implies differentiation of education in accordance with the learning and support needs of all students in a classroom (see, for instance, the country example below).

In Hungary, a 2021 ministerial decree<sup>(312)</sup> specifies as a learning outcome of ITE for teachers teaching at the primary level that the graduated teacher should know about the role of learning and educational environment and be aware of the possibilities/opportunities and teaching methods of inclusive education in the first six school grades. For teachers teaching at the secondary level, the ministerial decree states that the graduated teacher should have a well-founded knowledge of educational science, and psychological and sociological knowledge about the different views on the characteristics and development of a student's personality. More concretely, they should have knowledge of socialisation and personalisation, individualised education, disadvantaged students, disorders of personality development, causes of behavioural problems, different methods of child education, talent development and comprehensive health promotion. The graduated teacher should, moreover, be able to recognise and effectively develop students who are talented; who struggle with difficulties or who have special educational needs; who are disadvantaged; who are in different disadvantaged situations; who struggle with integration, learning and/or behavioural difficulties; and who require individual development in a given subject. The graduated teacher should be able to educate these students together with other students in an inclusive manner providing tailor-made development and education. The graduated teacher should also be able to consider the aspects of differentiation and individualisation when assessing and evaluating.

In terms of CPD, the Hungarian catalogue of accredited courses for teachers teaching at the primary and secondary levels contains a training programme on 'formative assessment and personalised learning in practice'<sup>(313)</sup>. It covers the following modules: (1) formative assessment, (2) formative assessment in practice, (3) personalised learning, (4) personalised learning in practice and (5) formative assessment and personalised learning in class.

The differentiation of teaching and assessment is closely related to the next most frequently promoted teacher competence through ITE, namely **implementing individualised teaching strategies**. In addition to requiring teachers to adapt teaching and learning processes to different student abilities and needs, based on individual learning and development paths, ITE programmes promoting this competence also require teachers to identify learning difficulties, report them and collaborate to address them. CPD programmes that promote teachers' competence to implement individualised teaching strategies sometimes focus on particular subjects or learning areas, such as maths (e.g. in Ireland), reading (e.g. in Austria) or arts (e.g. in Slovenia).

In Estonia, the occupational qualification standards for teachers<sup>(314)</sup> include the following among the mandatory competences for teachers: recognise a learner's need for support and their individual study needs (including for learners with more abilities); involve and cooperate with support specialists and colleagues in determining support and help needs (fill out a learner's individual development card); plan and apply learning and development activities (find suitable learning methods and forms, adjust teaching and learning according to abilities, modify learning materials, apply helping tools, plan the organisation of individual learning, form an individual curriculum and/or behavioural support plan); in collaboration with parents, support and guide the learner; notice and recognise learners' different interests, abilities and needs (including special educational needs, cultural specifics, etc.), ensure ability-appropriate study; take into account the main cognitive processes (perception, attention, memory, thinking, executive functions) when supporting a learner; collect data about a learner's development and efficiency within the learning process; use digital technologies to increase the inclusion of learners in learning; personalise learning paths by use of digital technologies; teach following a learner's specifics, and set goals, learning outcomes and cross-subject integration using different study formats and methods to support the development of a learner's learning and subject skills, following the principles of inclusive education; analyse teaching and modify activities and environment flexibly, considering a learner's needs (for moving); and ensure needed support is provided and analyse the effect of support measures together with other specialists.

<sup>(312)</sup> See <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-63-20-7Q> and <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1.300008.emm>.

<sup>(313)</sup> See <https://pedakkred.oh.gov.hu/PedAkkred/Catalogue/CatalogueDetails.aspx?id=7431>.

<sup>(314)</sup> See [https://www.kutseregister.ee/ctrl/en/Standardid/vaata/10824233#standard\\_seotud\\_oppekavad](https://www.kutseregister.ee/ctrl/en/Standardid/vaata/10824233#standard_seotud_oppekavad).

In Finland, the state-funded CPD programmes focus on different priority themes each year. In 2022/2023, the main themes included a focus on ‘Strengthening learning support and individual learning paths’<sup>(315)</sup>. Support for growth and learning plays a key role in the realisation of educational equality and non-discrimination. Learners have the right to receive adequate support in early childhood education and care, in pre-primary and basic education, in upper-secondary education and in the articulated stages of the learning path. The support must be individually planned, long-term, flexible and adaptable as needed, and of uniform quality. The in-service training provides participants with research-based information, methods and operating models that support learners’ growth and learning, individual learning paths and leadership. Special groups, such as students from migrant backgrounds, must also be considered in the planning and implementation of support. The aim is to promote the organisation and implementation of early support and a preventive approach in all educational, teaching and training situations in order to strengthen inclusion.

The number of education systems that report teacher training on individualised teaching strategies is the same as the number that report education and training programmes promoting teachers’ **understanding of principles of inclusion and non-discrimination**.

National ITE competence frameworks generally aim to foster teachers’ knowledge about different concepts and models for inclusive education and to ensure that teachers are committed to equality and to respecting and accommodating diversity, including any differences arising from age, gender, ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, etc. CPD programmes in this area also look at more specific issues, such as addressing gender and sexual orientation in schools (e.g. in the French Community of Belgium), bullying (e.g. in Czechia), inclusion and well-being (e.g. in Ireland), use of digital tools for promoting inclusion (e.g. in Spain), promoting the inclusion of disadvantaged learners in schools (e.g. in Hungary) or addressing anti-Roma racism (e.g. in Slovakia).

In France, the reference framework of professional skills for teaching professions<sup>(316)</sup> establishes a common culture on democratic values (‘Knowing how to transmit and share the principles of democratic life as well as the values of the Republic: Freedom, equality, fraternity, secularism,

the rejection of all forms of discrimination’). Moreover, the decree of 25 November 2020 on the content of ITE<sup>(317)</sup> promotes the development of a common culture of inclusive education. It aims to foster teachers’ understanding of the main concepts of inclusive education; to support their ability to observe, analyse, develop and co-construct pedagogical and didactic responses to the particular educational needs of students as a team; to foster their capacity to consider the diversity of students and their specific needs; to encourage the co-construction of (digital) tools and resources that promote the learning of students with special educational needs.

In North Macedonia, the training programme for professional development of teachers for 2022<sup>(318)</sup> includes some of the following themes: multiculturalism in monolingual and multilingual schools; breaking down barriers – building an inclusive school culture; gender equality and gender sensitivity in school; inclusion and approaches to teaching students with special educational needs or disabilities; cooperation between family and school in preventing peer violence, cyber violence and the like; and inclusive education in practice.

Another important aspect of promoting diversity and inclusion in schools is, compared with the previous two categories, reported as frequently in the context of ITE competence frameworks and slightly less frequently in the context of CPD programmes. It relates to a teacher’s ability to **collaborate with other teachers, education support staff, professionals and families**. ITE programmes promoting this competence aim, in particular, to foster a teacher’s ability to communicate with parents and caregivers of diverse backgrounds, to work with others in an educational team, and to initiate and maintain collaboration with external professionals and organisations. CPD programmes related to this competence area are sometimes focused on teacher collaboration with specific pedagogical staff, such as working with teacher assistants (e.g. in Czechia) or specific external stakeholders, such as local churches (e.g. in Hungary), employers and social partners (e.g. in North Macedonia).

The Spanish order<sup>(319)</sup> that establishes the requirements for the profession of teaching primary education specifies among the competences that all student teachers must

<sup>(315)</sup> See <https://www.oph.fi/fi/funding/opetustoimen-ja-varhaiskasvatuksen-henkilostokoulutus-2022>.

<sup>(316)</sup> See <https://www.education.gouv.fr/le-referentiel-de-competences-des-metiers-du-professorat-et-de-l-education-5753>.

<sup>(317)</sup> See <https://www.education.gouv.fr/bo/21/Hebdo2/MENE2032812A.htm>.

<sup>(318)</sup> See [https://mon.gov.mk/stored/document/Programa%20mk\\_1.pdf](https://mon.gov.mk/stored/document/Programa%20mk_1.pdf).

<sup>(319)</sup> See [https://www.boe.es/diario\\_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2007-22449](https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2007-22449).

acquire the ability to design, plan and evaluate teaching and learning processes, both individually and in collaboration with other teachers and professionals at the school. Concerning the module 'society, family and school', one of the competences to be acquired is linking education to the environment and cooperating with families and the community. At the same time, in the placement in schools, one of the competences to be acquired is to learn about ways of collaborating with the different sectors of the educational community and the social environment.

The order <sup>(320)</sup> that establishes the requirements for the professions of teaching compulsory secondary education and baccalaureate, of providing vocational training and of language teaching specifies that all student teachers must acquire the ability to plan, develop and evaluate the teaching and learning processes, promoting educational processes that facilitate the acquisition of the competences of the respective courses and taking into account the level and previous training of the students and their orientation, both individually and in collaboration with other teachers and professionals of the school. They must also be able to analyse the organisation and functioning of the school in order to coordinate the personal, academic and vocational guidance of students in collaboration with the members of the school community.

In **Malta**, CPD programmes are offered to all educators by the Institute for Education <sup>(321)</sup>. Courses specific to developing teachers' ability to collaborate with other teachers, education support staff, families and other stakeholders include the following.

- Collaboration and networking. Leading the professional team – collaboration with the complementary teacher, learning support assistant, inclusion coordinator and senior management team.
- Collaborative learning – setting up a community of practice among teachers.
- Communication skills for senior management team/educators.
- Developing a professional learning community through collaborative practices.
- Parental involvement.
- Supporting parents of students with challenging behaviours.

Next in terms of frequency are teacher training programmes and opportunities focused on **teaching in multicultural or multilingual settings**. More than half of the education systems report CPD programmes in this area, and slightly more than half of them mention that it is addressed in national ITE competence frameworks. The ITE competence frameworks include learning objectives such as being able to develop teaching in a multilingual classroom, addressing school situations in a multicultural context and promoting the inclusion of students from different sociocultural backgrounds. More specific topics addressed through nationally promoted CPD programmes include teaching the language of schooling (e.g. in the French Community of Belgium) and teaching from a second-language perspective (e.g. in Sweden); teaching newly arrived students (e.g. in France) and, more specifically, teaching newly arrived learners from Ukraine (e.g. in Czechia and Ireland); teaching national minority students (e.g. in Croatia); plurilingual teaching and learning (e.g. in Austria); and multicultural and global education (e.g. in Estonia).

In **Switzerland**, national regulations <sup>(322)</sup> on ITE determine that future teachers need to be able to identify opportunities, risks and conditions for success in inclusive education and name, recognise and classify challenges in the developmental process and the special needs of learners. They should also be able to analyse sociocultural differences and reflect on their significance in the educational field. Future teachers need to have a working knowledge of issues related to the reproduction of social inequality through the education system, class and milieu theories, institutional discrimination, construction and reconstruction of difference, racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and fundamental and human rights issues.

The **Portuguese Association of Teachers for Intercultural Education (APEDI)** <sup>(323)</sup> has a series of professional training activities related to interculturality in school contexts addressed to teaching staff. This includes courses promoting a teacher's ability to teach students with a different mother tongue in contexts of cultural diversity, to learn to live in and with diversity and to implement cross-cultural and multilingual activities. The aim is to develop educational practices that promote values such as peace, acceptance and respect, and to valorise the importance of the school community for building an intercultural world.

<sup>(320)</sup> See <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2007-22450>.

<sup>(321)</sup> See <https://instituteforeducation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Courses/COPE%20Sessions/Professional-Learning-Areas.aspx#8>.

<sup>(322)</sup> See the national regulations on the recognition of teacher diplomas for primary level, lower secondary level and upper secondary level ([https://edudoc.ch/record/202452/files/Regl\\_Lehrdiplome\\_d.pdf](https://edudoc.ch/record/202452/files/Regl_Lehrdiplome_d.pdf)) and programme plan for teacher education, primary level, Bern University of Teacher Education (<https://qmp.phbern.ch/File/CoreDownload?id=1946>).

<sup>(323)</sup> See <http://apedi.pt>.

The teacher competence that is the least frequently reported as a topic for ITE and/or CPD, among the topics analysed here, is **awareness of bias and stereotypes**. Even so, over half of European education systems indicate that nationally promoted CPD programmes address this area. In terms of content, ITE competence frameworks cover different aspects related to this competence, such as a knowledge of fundamental values, freedom of expression and religion, respect for (ethnic) minorities and for gender equality. Similarly, CPD programmes touch upon different related topics, in particular sex-, gender- and sexual orientation-based stereotypes and prejudices (e.g. in Czechia, Ireland, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal and Sweden; see also the country example below).

In **Sweden**, the objectives for the teacher's degree included in the higher education ordinance <sup>(324)</sup> specify, among other things, that teachers should demonstrate the capacity to communicate and instil core educational values, including human rights and the fundamental democratic values; prevent and restrain discrimination and other forms of harassment of children; and respect, communicate and instil a gender equal and an equal rights perspective in educational processes.

The CPD programme 'Girls–boys: let's break gender stereotypes at school!' <sup>(325)</sup> offered in the **French Community of Belgium** aims to enable teachers to deconstruct stereotypes and representations related to sex, gender and sexual orientation by identifying and analysing the discriminatory messages conveyed by literature, textbooks, the media, the students themselves, etc.; to become aware of the inequalities between girls and boys, between heterosexuals, homosexuals and bisexuals, and between cisgender and transgender people at school and in society; and to use tools based on young people's questions about diversity, equality and difference, and promote non-discriminatory attitudes.

### 7.3. Educational support staff in schools

To further support teachers in responding to the needs of diverse students and promote inclusion in schools, educational support staff, that is, different specialists such as psychologists, speech therapists, special educational needs specialists, social workers, etc., or teaching assistants, can be allocated to schools. Education authorities may put in place policies that require or recommend the availability of this type of educational support staff in schools to promote students' learning and/or provide specific interventions, or they may provide financial resources that allow schools to employ support staff.

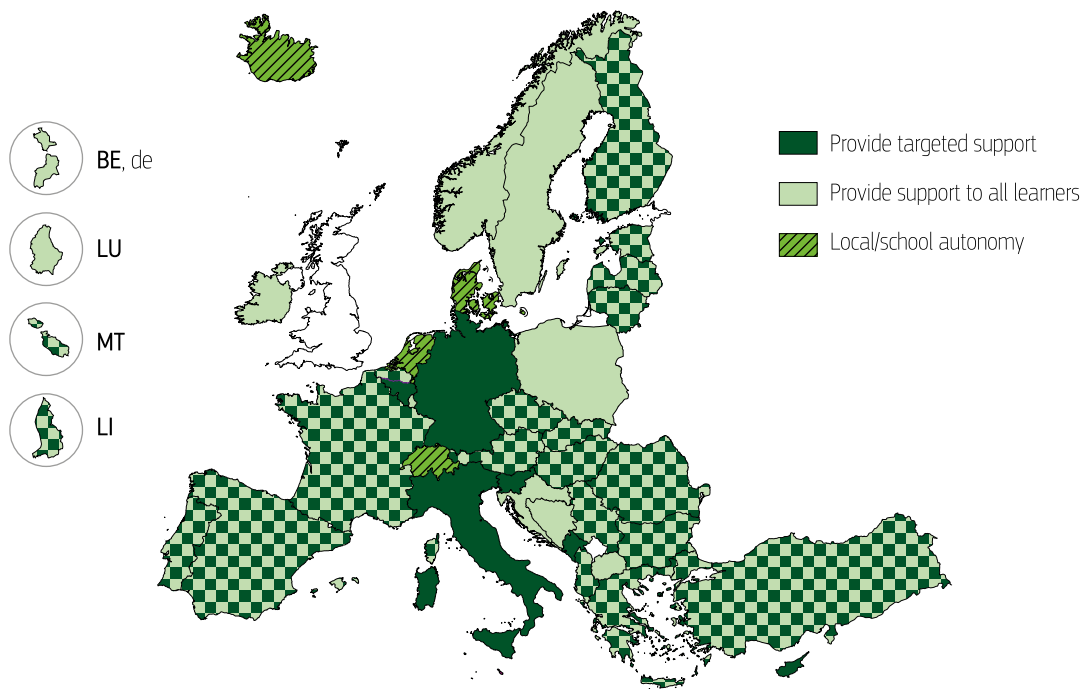
Figure 7.3 presents the European education systems that have top-level policies or measures related to educational support staff in schools, and whether these staff are intended to work with specific groups of students who require additional support or whether they are tasked with supporting all learners who may require additional help. It should be noted that, in most education systems, schools and teachers also cooperate with dedicated guidance and counselling centres that can provide advice and support for students' academic, cognitive, linguistic, sensory and psychomotor, emotional and social development (see also Chapter 6). However, the focus here is on top-level policies or measures determining the availability of educational support staff who work in schools and who can provide direct assistance to both students and teachers in the classroom.

The data show that top-level policies or measures on educational support staff in schools are indeed reported almost everywhere; only a minority of education systems do not regulate this area, or they leave the matter in the hands of local authorities or schools.

324 See [https://www.uhr.se/en/start/laws-and-regulations/Laws-and-regulations/The-Higher-Education-Ordinance/Annex-2/#BAMA\\_PrimEdu](https://www.uhr.se/en/start/laws-and-regulations/Laws-and-regulations/The-Higher-Education-Ordinance/Annex-2/#BAMA_PrimEdu).

325 See <https://www.csem.be/eduquer-aux-medias/formations/filles-garcons-brisons-les-stereotypes-de-genre-lecole>.

Figure 7.3: Main tasks of educational support staff working in schools, 2022/2023



Source: Eurydice

Around two thirds of the education systems report top-level policies and measures promoting the availability of educational support staff in schools who **provide targeted additional support**. In most of these cases, the emphasis is on meeting the needs of students with special educational needs (see the country example below). Another main task of the support staff is to assist students who are not yet fully proficient in the language of schooling. Some education systems, such as those in Czechia<sup>(326)</sup>, Latvia<sup>(327)</sup> and Austria<sup>(328)</sup>, also report a particular focus on support staff catering to the language and other needs of learners from Ukraine. Latvia<sup>(329)</sup> and Slovenia<sup>(330)</sup> report policies guiding the availability of Roma teacher assistants in schools with a larger number of Roma students.

**In Czechia**, on the basis of the recommendation of a school guidance and counselling facility, a teacher assistant who works in classes with students with special educational needs, disabilities or learning/behavioural disorders and who supports newly arrived learners may be

employed in schools<sup>(331)</sup>. The teacher assistant is part of the support measures helping with the inclusion of these learners in the educational process and activities in and outside the classroom. The assistant also works with the other students in the class, following the instructions of the teacher. Interpreters of Czech sign language and a speech transcriber for deaf students can also be employed.

Several education systems, such as those in Czechia<sup>(332)</sup>, Spain<sup>(333)</sup>, Hungary<sup>(334)</sup>, Malta<sup>(335)</sup>, Finland<sup>(336)</sup>, Albania<sup>(337)</sup>, Liechtenstein<sup>(338)</sup> and Türkiye<sup>(339)</sup>, determine that educational support staff should be available in schools to support, among others, disadvantaged students or those at risk of discrimination, for example students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds or those living in socially excluded geographical areas.

<sup>(326)</sup> See <https://www.edu.cz/methodology/metodicke-poznamky-k-zajisteni-ukrajinskeho-asistenta-pedagoga-od-zari-2022>.

<sup>(327)</sup> See <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/ukraini-nak-paliga-latvijas-skolas--strada-gan-par-ukrainu-valodas-skolotajiem-gan-pedagoga-paligiem.a454994>.

<sup>(328)</sup> See <https://www.integrationsfonds.at/buddy-programm>.

<sup>(329)</sup> See <https://www.km.gov.lv/lv/diskute-par-romu-skolotaju-paligu-darbibas-prakses-attistibu-izglitibas-iestades?utm>.

<sup>(330)</sup> See <http://pisisr.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV7973>.

<sup>(331)</sup> See <https://www.edu.cz/methodology/metodicke-poznamky-k-zajisteni-ukrajinskeho-asistenta-pedagoga-od-zari-2022>.

<sup>(332)</sup> See <https://www.edu.cz/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Katalog-nastroju-priklady.pdf>.

<sup>(333)</sup> See <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=B0E-A-2006-7899#a71>.

<sup>(334)</sup> See <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2013-326-20-22>.

<sup>(335)</sup> See <https://eduserVICES.gov.mt/en/education-psycho-social-services>.

<sup>(336)</sup> See <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2013/20131287#L1P6>.

<sup>(337)</sup> See [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Draft-Strategjia-per-Arsimin-2021-2026.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwj\\_jPTXwtP\\_AhVRR\\_EDHfbvDloQFnoECBIQAQ&usq=A0vVaw3nnHonDwdz\\_FrSn9qW0FsO](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Draft-Strategjia-per-Arsimin-2021-2026.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwj_jPTXwtP_AhVRR_EDHfbvDloQFnoECBIQAQ&usq=A0vVaw3nnHonDwdz_FrSn9qW0FsO).

<sup>(338)</sup> See <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2004154000?version=1.2>.

<sup>(339)</sup> See <https://orgm.meb.gov.tr/www/2020-2021-rehberlik-ve-psikolojik-danisma-programi/icerik/1413>.

In most education systems, top-level policies and measures also indicate that educational support staff shall be available in schools to **work with all learners who require additional support**. To this end, education authorities generally provide financial resources, and it is up to the schools to request or organise the services of the support staff. In some education systems falling into this category, such as in Poland <sup>(340)</sup>, there is a legal obligation for schools to employ educational support staff, not only to assist all learners who need it, but also to support subject teachers in meeting the learning needs of learners during school lessons and to cooperate with parents.

Educational support staff intended to support all learners mainly provide assistance to students whose needs are not only pedagogical, that is, they provide speech therapy, psychological support, social pedagogical interventions, etc. However, in some education systems, policies envisage the availability of other specific support staff or interventions. For example, in Latvia <sup>(341)</sup>, policies emphasise the involvement of support staff in every educational institution to promote an inclusive education approach. The support is intended for learners who need it due to various circumstances; however, in practice, it is especially needed for students with special educational needs and students from families at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion. In Malta, in addition to learning support educators assisting learners with general learning support needs, peripatetic literacy and numeracy teachers are employed by the Department of Education, within the ministry responsible for education, to work together with the classroom teachers to support all learners to master the core competences.

In Croatia, the definition of the work of expert associates comes from the primary and secondary school education act <sup>(342)</sup>, in which it is stated that expert associates perform direct educational work with students, as well as professional development and coordination tasks. Expert associates in schools are oriented towards empowerment, providing support to children and their families, and teachers with the aim of ensuring children's well-being and trying to teach children life skills (e.g. critical thinking and emotional regulation) that can help them deal more effectively with challenging situations now and later in life. Numerous prevention programmes are carried out with the students, which are incorporated into the school's annual plan and work programme through workshops,

lectures, visits, etc. Expert associates are most often the leaders of prevention programmes in schools and the leaders responsible for prevention activities, thus playing an important role in the context of prevention of violence and all other forms of risky behaviour. More specifically, work is being done to create a supportive and encouraging environment for students, considering their needs and providing support to them and their families in crisis and in transit periods of life.

The methods to be used by expert associates to protect students, and other roles of expert associates, are clearly stated in the relevant regulations <sup>(343)</sup>. Furthermore, the ordinance on teaching assistants and professional communication intermediaries <sup>(344)</sup> defines the methods of inclusion; the methods and content of training; the performance of teaching assistants and professional communication intermediaries in schools and other public institutions that carry out educational activities, and the conditions they must fulfil; and the procedure for exercising the right of students with developmental difficulties to the support of teaching assistants and professional communication intermediaries.

It should be pointed out that, despite the top-level policies and measures in this area, there is evidence that, across Europe, inadequate funding has resulted in educational support staff losing their employment in some cases. This has, for example, led families of children with special educational needs to seek special schools because mainstream schools sometimes cannot support students appropriately without well-qualified support staff working alongside teachers. Adequate public funding is therefore crucial in order for schools to be able to ensure the employment of educational support staff (ETUCE-CSEE, 2021).

<sup>(340)</sup> See <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20210001762>.

<sup>(341)</sup> See <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/324332-par-izglitiba-attistibas-pamatnostadnem-2021-2027-gadam>.

<sup>(342)</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3YwiECO>.

<sup>(343)</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3FE1tGa>, <https://bit.ly/3GqJfM>, <https://bit.ly/3YCMWTC>, <https://bit.ly/3YxsCTL> and <https://bit.ly/415Dt7m>.

<sup>(344)</sup> See <https://bit.ly/3hAsuSK>.

## 7.4. Summary

A well-prepared and diverse teacher workforce is an important element when it comes to the implementation of policies for promoting diversity and inclusion in schools. However, across Europe, only eight education systems have top-level policies or measures promoting the recruitment of teachers from diverse background to schools. Where such measures exist, they promote mainly the recruitment of teachers with disabilities or those from migrant backgrounds.

Teacher education and training can also prepare and support teachers to respond to the increasing diversity in classrooms and to promote inclusive learning approaches. Competence frameworks for ITE and/or CPD programmes that are either provided or supported (e.g. financially) by top-level education authorities promote many relevant teacher competences. The most widely reported competences relate to teaching students with special educational needs, differentiating and individualising teaching and assessment strategies, and understanding principles of inclusion and non-discrimination. Somewhat less frequently reported are education and training programmes promoting a teacher's capacity to collaborate with other teachers, professionals and families; on teaching in multicultural/multilingual settings; and increasing awareness of bias and stereotypes.

It should be noted, however, that 2018 TALIS data show that relatively small proportions of teachers across Europe had attended CPD on some of the aforementioned topics within the 12 months preceding the survey. Moreover, teachers expressed concern over the lack of training and preparation in managing an inclusive classroom, especially in primary education. This points to a potential need to analyse the barriers to participation in relevant training programmes in order to ensure that teachers have the required competences to promote diversity and inclusion in schools.

This chapter also investigated the existing top-level policies or measures on educational support staff in schools to support class teachers in responding to the needs of diverse students and to promote inclusion in schools. Most European education systems require or recommend that different specialists (e.g. psychologists, speech therapists, special educational needs specialists, social workers) or teaching assistants should be available in schools and/or they provide financial resources that allow schools to employ support staff.

Around two thirds of the education systems report policies and measures promoting the involvement of educational support staff in schools in view of providing additional support mainly to students with special educational needs, to those who are not yet fully proficient in the language of schooling (including learners from Ukraine) and to Roma students. In most education systems, top-level policies and measures also indicate that educational support staff in schools should work with all learners who require additional support. However, adequate public funding is crucial in order for schools to be able to ensure the employment of educational support staff.

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## Glossary

**Admission policies:** decisions, criteria, assessments, school entrance examinations and other selection procedures used to decide who is offered a place in a school or in a programme. These may be related to students' academic achievements (academic admission criteria) and/or other non-academic student characteristics (including criteria related to students' socioeconomic background, place of residence, religious affiliation or agreement to the school's instruction or ideological orientation, etc).

**Assessment adaptation/modification/ accommodation:** an alteration in the way a general assessment or test is done or applied. Assessment adaptation allows, for example, learners with special educational needs to show what they know or what they can do by removing the barriers that may be intrinsic in the assessment itself (for example, providing written test questions orally to learners with visual impairments).

**Assistive technology:** equipment, devices, apparatuses, services, systems, processes and environmental modifications used by people with disabilities to overcome social, infrastructural and other barriers to learning independence, to enable safe and easy participation in learning activities and full participation in society (UNESCO, 2020).

**Barriers (to learning):** barriers or circumstances that in education – and during the learning process – restrict the full participation of learners, of which there may be many. Many learners will have different requirements (short and long term) that may require consideration to enable them to take part in all activities and gain full benefit from the opportunities on offer. Full and active participation may be affected by negative attitudes and deficit thinking, physical barriers, poor access to communication aids and appropriate information in accessible formats or a lack of confidence and/or training in the skills necessary to take part.

**Blended learning:** learning that involves a diversity of approaches, that is, that requires a school, teacher or trainer or learner to take more than one approach to the learning process: blending school site and other physical environments away from the school site (either with the presence of a teacher/trainer, or separated by space and/or time in distance learning), and/or blending different learning tools, which can be digital (including online learning) and non-digital.

**Competence framework (for ITE):** a set of statements of what a teacher should know or be able

to do. These statements contain a description of the skills and competences a teacher should have. The format, value and recognition of these frameworks may vary across countries.

**Continuing professional development (CPD):** the in-service training undertaken throughout a teacher's career that allows them to broaden, develop and update their knowledge, skills and attitudes. It may be formal or informal and include both subject-based and pedagogical training. Different formats are offered, such as courses, seminars, workshops, degree programmes, peer or self-observation and/or reflection, support from teacher networks, observation visits, etc. In certain cases, CPD activities may lead to supplementary qualifications.

**Curriculum (or similar steering documents):** an official document issued by top-level education authorities detailing programmes of study and/or any of the following: learning content, learning objectives, attainment targets, guidelines on student assessment and syllabuses. More than one type of curriculum or steering document may be in force at any one time in an education system, and these may impose different levels of obligation on schools to comply. They may, for example, contain advice, recommendations or regulations. Whatever the level of obligation, they all establish the basic framework within which schools develop their own teaching to meet their students' needs.

**Disability:** according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, a broad concept, covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which they live. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental and social barriers.

**Disaggregated data:** here, data on individual student characteristics, for example sex, country of birth, nationality, ethnicity, language spoken at home, religious affiliation, sexual orientation/gender identity and expression, and special educational needs.

**Discrimination:** here, any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on ethnic background, skin colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, etc., has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in

education and, in particular, of depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level; of limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard; of establishing or maintaining separate educational systems or institutions for persons or groups of persons; or of inflicting on any person or group of persons conditions which are incompatible with the dignity of man (UN Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960).

**Diversity:** differences between people, which may relate to their sex, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion or mental and physical ability (UNESCO, 2017).

**Early leaving from education and training (ELET):** leaving the education having completed, at most, lower secondary education and having no further involvement in education or training.

**Educational support staff:** professionals who are not classroom teachers, including, but not limited to, teaching assistants, speech and language specialists, special educational needs specialists, counsellors and psychologists, who provide additional support to students in schools.

**Equality:** fairness in how we treat other people. Equality refers to providing equitable opportunities and access, and fair outcomes for different people and protecting people from unlawful discrimination. Equality does not mean treating everyone the same, but making sure people are treated fairly (Loke, 2022).

**Equality body:** public organisations that assist victims of discrimination, monitor and report on discrimination issues and contribute to an awareness of rights and a societal valuing of equality. They are legally required to do so in relation to one, some or all of the grounds of discrimination covered by EU law – gender, race and ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability. They play a fundamental role in the non-discrimination architecture of the EU (see Equinet (European Network of Equality Bodies), <https://www.equineteurope.org>).

**Ethnic minority students:** according to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, any student from an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority that constitutes less than half of the population in the entire territory of a state whose members share common characteristics of culture, religion or language, or a combination of any of these. A person can freely belong to an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority without any requirement of citizenship, residence, official recognition or any other status. In Europe, the Roma are the largest ethnic minority.

**Gender:** according to the European Institute for Gender Equality (a number of definitions have been put forward by different organisations), the social

attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and the relationships between women and men and between girls and boys, as well as those between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes. They are context and time specific, and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. The term is also used more broadly to denote a range of identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female (i.e. gender as a spectrum).

**Inclusion (inclusive education):** an approach that values diversity and aims to afford equal rights and opportunities to everyone. In the area of education, inclusive policies aim ‘to allow all learners to achieve their full potential by providing good quality education to all in mainstream settings with special attention to learners at risk of exclusion and underachievement by actively seeking out to support them and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners, including through individualised approaches, targeted support and cooperation with families and local communities’ (European Commission, 2018, p. 15).

**Inclusive language:** language that aims to ensure that everyone feels welcomed, valued and respected in all communications, interactions and spaces. Inclusive language involves the use of terms that are culturally aware, centre on a person and respect individual identity. There are a number of strategies to make language more inclusive. See, for example, the UN guidelines regarding gender-inclusive language (<https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml>).

**Initial teacher education (ITE):** a period of study and training during which prospective teachers attend academic subject-based courses and undertake professional training (either concurrently or consecutively) to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to be a teacher. Higher education institutions are the main providers of ITE in most European education systems.

**International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED):** a classification system developed to facilitate comparisons of education statistics and indicators across countries on the basis of uniform and internationally agreed definitions. The coverage of ISCED extends to all organised and sustained learning opportunities for children, young people and adults, including those with special educational needs, irrespective of the institutions or organisations providing them or the form in which they are delivered. The first statistical data collection based on the new classification (ISCED 2011) took place in 2014).

The current classification – ISCED 2011 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012) – has the following levels of primary and secondary education.

**ISCED 1:** Primary education provides learning and educational activities typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e. literacy and numeracy). It establishes a sound foundation for learning, a solid understanding of core areas of knowledge and fosters personal development, thus preparing students for lower secondary education. It provides basic learning with little specialisation, if any.

This level begins between 5 and 7 years of age, is compulsory in all countries and generally lasts from 4 to 7 years.

**ISCED 24:** Programmes at ISCED level 24, or lower secondary education, typically build upon the fundamental teaching and learning processes that begin at ISCED level 1. Usually, the educational aim is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and personal development that prepares students for further educational opportunities. Programmes at this level are usually organised around a more subject-oriented curriculum, introducing theoretical concepts across a broad range of subjects.

This level typically begins around the age of 10 or 13 and usually ends at age 14 or 16, often coinciding with the end of compulsory education.

The ISCED designator 24 denotes general lower secondary education.

**ISCED 34:** Programmes at ISCED level 34, or upper secondary education, are typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary or higher education, or to provide skills relevant to employment, or both. Programmes at this level offer students more subject-based, specialist and in-depth programmes than in lower secondary education (ISCED level 24). They are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available.

This level generally begins at the end of compulsory education. The entry age is typically age 14 or 16. Entry qualifications (e.g. completion of compulsory education) or other minimum requirements are usually needed. The duration of ISCED level 34 varies from 2 to 5 years.

The ISCED designator 34 denotes general upper secondary education.

**Legislation/strategy/action plan:** an official policy document developed by top-level authorities in an effort to achieve an overall goal. More specifically, legislation refers to rules or regulations. In the area of education, legislation is intended to guide the workings

and goals of a particular education system. A strategy can contain a vision, identify objectives and goals (qualitative and quantitative), describe processes, authorities and people in charge, identify funding sources, make recommendations, etc. An action plan is a systematic way of defining a goal, figuring out ways for meeting the goal and deciding how to assess whether the goal has been met.

**Learners who are disadvantaged and/or at risk of discrimination:** students whose family, social or economic circumstances, personal characteristics or cultural background hinder their access and equal opportunities in school education. Students at risk of underachievement, drop-out, early leaving from education and training. Students who may experience discrimination based on individual characteristics, such as their gender, national/ethnic/religious background, disability, etc.

**LGBTIQ+ students:** children and young people who are attracted to others of their own gender (lesbian, gay) or more than one gender (bisexual); whose gender identity and/or expression does not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth (transgender); who are born with sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definition of male or female (intersex); or whose identity does not fit into a binary classification of sex and/or gender (non-binary). 'Q' stands for queer, which is an umbrella term for people who are not heterosexual or cisgendered (a person whose gender corresponds with their sex assigned at birth). The 'plus' represents other sexual identities.

**Local/school autonomy:** the ability of local authorities/schools to take decisions alone within the limits set by national/local legislation or regulations. Guidelines can, nevertheless, be provided by the education authority, but they do not restrict school autonomy.

**Mainstream education:** regular education settings in which students of different backgrounds, identities and abilities learn together (UNESCO, 2020).

**Migrant students:** here, newly arrived/first-generation, second-generation or returning migrant children and young people who participate in the formal education system of a country.

**Monitoring body:** here, an appointed group, department, observatory, etc., that oversees issues related to discrimination and disadvantage, that is, it may report on discrimination issues, investigate specific cases, conduct research, and provide information, policy recommendations, etc.

**National/top level:** the highest level of authority in a given country, usually at the national (state) level.

**Promoting diversity:** in the field of education, promoting acceptance and respect for differences between people, in the sense of ‘understanding each other and moving beyond the more limited perspective of tolerance’ (European Commission, 2018). It includes making reasonable adjustments to take account of the practical implications of diversity.

**Religious minority students:** see ethnic minority students.

**Refugee students:** children and young people participating in the formal education system of a country who are third-country nationals and who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, are outside the country of nationality and are unable or, owing to such fear, are unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country.

**Segregation:** for students with a particular characteristic in terms of background, identity or ability, provision of education in separate classes or schools isolated from students without this characteristic (UNESCO, 2020).

**Sex:** refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics, such as reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormones, etc., that define humans as female or male.

**Socioeconomic background:** the position of an individual or group on the socioeconomic scale, which is determined by a combination of social and economic factors such as income, level and kind of education, type and prestige of occupation, place of residence, and – in some societies or parts of society – ethnic origin or religious background. As regards the socioeconomic status of learners in schools, some components that can be considered are parental education and/or occupation and a disadvantaged home learning environment.

**Special education:** a system of education in which students with special educational needs or disabilities learn separately from those without special educational needs or disabilities (UNESCO, 2020).

**Special educational needs (SEN):** a term commonly used to describe the needs of a child who is not able to benefit from the school education made generally available for children of the same age without additional support or adaptations in the content of studies. Therefore, SEN can cover a variety of needs, including physical or mental disabilities, and cognition or educational impairments. The concept is a construct that countries usually define further within their legislation. Special or ‘additional’ needs should be seen as not only the result of ‘in-child’ factors, but rather

‘a discrepancy between what a system of schooling ordinarily provides and what the child needs to support their learning’ (Rouse, 2008, p. 6, cited by Soriano, Watkins and Ebersold, 2017, p. 22).

**Targeted learning support:** resources and instructional strategies addressing the specific learning needs of learners who are disadvantaged and/or at risk of discrimination. It helps them to learn and develop their academic skills to function at their optimal learning capacity in the learning environment.

**Targeted social-emotional support:** specialist interventions and professionals to support the specific social and emotional challenges faced in education settings by learners who are disadvantaged and/or at risk of discrimination. It helps them to develop their resilience and manage their thoughts, feelings and relationships. This type of support may be provided by professionals/services internal and/or external to the school.

**Top-level education authorities:** the highest level of authority with responsibility for education in a given country, usually located at the national (state) level. However, for Belgium, Germany and Spain, the *Communautés*, *Länder* and *Comunidades Autónomas*, and the devolved administrations, respectively, are either wholly responsible or share responsibilities with the state level for all or most areas relating to education. Therefore, these administrations are considered as the top-level authorities for the areas where they hold the responsibility, whereas, for those areas for which they share the responsibility with the national (state) level, both are considered to be top-level authorities.

**Top-level policy/measure:** regulations, recommendations, official steering documents (including curriculum), actions (including monitoring and evaluation) and/or funding provided by top-level education authorities in order to promote the issue at hand.



## Annex

## Chapter 2: Monitoring discrimination and diversity in schools

Table 2.2A: Main grounds on which discrimination cases in schools are based, 2022/2023 – data by country

Education system	SEN/disability	Ethnic background	Gender	Other	Nationality	Sex	Religious affiliation	Socio-economic background	Sexual orientation	No data available
BE fr										✓
BE de										✓
BE nl										✓
BG	✓	✓								
CZ				✓						
DK										✓
DE										✓
EE	✓									
IE										✓
EL										✓
ES										✓
FR	✓		✓							
HR	✓	✓					✓			
IT										✓
CY	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
LV		✓		✓						
LT										✓
LU				✓						
HU	✓				✓			✓		
MT										✓
NL										✓
AT										✓
PL										✓
PT										✓
RO	✓	✓						✓		
SI	✓			✓						
SK	✓							✓		
FI										✓
SE	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
AL										✓
BA	✓	✓	✓			✓				
CH										✓
IS										✓
LI										✓
ME	✓	✓								
MK										✓
NO	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
RS	✓	✓			✓					
TR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			

**Table 2.3A: Data on individual student characteristics accessible to top-level education authorities, 2022/2023 – data by country**

Edu- cation system	Sex/ gender	SEN/ disability	Nation- ality	Country of birth	Socio- economic back- ground	Refugee/ asylum seeker back- ground	Migration back- ground	Language spoken at home	Other	Ethnic back- ground	Religious affiliation	No access to disaggre- gated data
BE fr	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
BE de	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	
BE nl	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓				
BG	✓	✓										
CZ	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓			
DK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
DE	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓				
EE	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				
IE	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
EL	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
ES	✓	✓	✓						✓			
FR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓			
HR	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓			
IT	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓			
CY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
LV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
LT	✓	✓			✓							
LU	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓				
HU	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓					
MT	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓						
NL												✓
AT	✓	✓	✓					✓				
PL	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓			
PT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓		
RO	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	
SI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
SK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
FI	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓				
SE	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓			
AL												✓
BA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
CH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
IS	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓				
LI	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	
ME	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					
MK	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓		
NO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		
RS	✓											
TR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	



**Table 2.4A: Main fields of cooperation between top-level education authorities and equality bodies, 2022/2023 – data by country**

Education system	Policy development	Monitoring discrimination and disadvantage in schools	Identifying good practices	Providing support to victims	Policy evaluation	Other	No cooperation
BE fr	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
BE de						✓	
BE nl	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
BG	✓		✓				
CZ		✓		✓		✓	
DK	✓					✓	
DE	✓						
EE	✓	✓	✓		✓		
IE	✓						
EL	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
ES	✓		✓	✓		✓	
FR		✓	✓	✓			
HR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
IT	✓		✓	✓			
CY				✓			
LV	✓	✓			✓	✓	
LT	✓						
LU							✓
HU	✓	✓			✓		
MT	✓					✓	
NL		✓					
AT							✓
PL	✓			✓			
PT	✓	✓	✓	✓			
RO		✓	✓		✓		
SI	✓	✓			✓		
SK	✓						
FI	✓		✓				
SE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
AL		✓					
BA		✓					
CH							✓
IS						✓	
LI							✓
ME	✓	✓	✓		✓		
MK	✓	✓					
NO	✓		✓	✓			
RS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
TR							✓



## Chapter 3: Top-level legislation, strategies and action plans promoting diversity and inclusion in schools

**Table 3.1A: Main aims of top-level legislation, strategies and action plans promoting diversity and inclusion in schools, 2022/2023 – data by country**

Edu- cation system	Improving the education system, including through inclusive education, equal access and support	Preventing discrimina- tion and promoting equal opportuni- ties, including in education	Improving academic outcomes and/or reducing ELET	Promoting inclusive education	Promoting participa- tion and inclusion of Roma students	Inclusion and support to students with SEN/ disabilities	Promoting diversity and inclusion of migrant/ refugee students	Promoting gender equality	Combating anti- semitism	Combating discrimi- nation of LGBTIQ+ students
BE fr	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
BE de						✓	✓			
BE nl		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓
BG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
CZ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
DK	✓				✓		✓		✓	
DE			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
EE	✓	✓	✓							
IE		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
EL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
ES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
FR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HR	✓	✓			✓	✓				
IT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CY	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
LV	✓				✓				✓	
LT	✓				✓					
LU	✓					✓	✓			
HU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
MT	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
NL		✓	✓							
AT			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
PL	✓				✓	✓	✓			
PT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
RO		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
SI	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
SK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
FI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
SE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AL	✓	✓			✓					
BA	✓				✓					
CH	✓	✓								
IS				✓						
LI	✓									
ME				✓		✓				
MK	✓	✓								
NO	✓									
RS	✓				✓					
TR	✓		✓							

## Chapter 4: Promoting access to and participation in schools

**Table 4.1A: Targeted top-level policies and measures promoting learners' school access and participation, 2022/2023 – data by country**

Education system	Easing access to mainstream education for students with SEN/disabilities	Improving physical accessibility and infrastructure	Providing financial support for school-related costs	Providing social assistance and support	Offering blended learning opportunities	Addressing school admission	Removing administrative barriers	Promoting cooperation with parents and families	Local/school autonomy
BE fr	✓					✓			
BE de	✓								
BE nl	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
BG	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
CZ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
DK		✓			✓				
DE			✓			✓		✓	
EE	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		
IE	✓		✓	✓				✓	
EL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
ES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
FR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
HR	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
IT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
LV	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
LT	✓	✓	✓						
LU	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
HU	✓		✓	✓		✓			
MT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
NL		✓			✓				
AT	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	
PL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
PT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
RO			✓			✓			
SI	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
SK	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	
FI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SE	✓	✓			✓				
AL	✓								
BA	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
CH		✓	✓		✓		✓		
IS									✓
LI							✓		
ME	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
MK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
NO	✓	✓			✓				
RS			✓			✓			
TR			✓						



**Table 5.3A: Student groups targeted in school curricula addressing diversity and inclusion, 2022/2023 – data by country**

Education system	Students with SEN/disabilities		Ethnic minority students		Migrant students		Refugee students		Girls/boys		Students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds		Religious minority students		LGBTIQ+ students		No specific target group	
	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲
BE fr																		▲
BE de																		○
BE nl																		○
BG																		○
CZ	○		○		○		○				○							
DK																		○
DE			○		○		○											
EE	○		○		○				○				○					
IE																		▲
EL		▲		▲		▲		▲										
ES		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		
FR		▲		▲						▲		▲				▲		
HR																		▲
IT																		○
CY	○		○		○		○		○		○		○					
LV								▲										▲
LT		▲		▲		▲												
LU																		○
HU	○		○				○				○		○					
MT																		○
NL																		○
AT		▲		▲		▲				▲								
PL	○		○										○					
PT																		▲
RO																		○
SI																		○
SK																		○
FI	○		○		○		○		○				○		○			
SE																		○
AL	○		○		○		○		○		○		○		○			
BA																		○
CH																		○
IS	○		○		○		○		○		○		○		○			
LI																		▲
ME		▲																
MK		▲		▲						▲		▲		▲				
NO																		▲
RS	○		○		○		○											
TR	○		○		○				○		○		○					

EC ○ = In existing curricula.

CR ▲ = In recent curriculum revisions.

**Table 5.4A: Topics related to diversity and inclusion in school curricula, 2022/2023 – data by country**

Education system	Preventing prejudice and discrimination		Addressing human rights		Representing diverse identities		Combating stereotypes		Awareness-raising on exclusion, bullying and/or violence		Tackling mis- or non-representation of minorities/groups		Using inclusive language	
	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲	EC ○	CR ▲
BE fr		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲				▲
BE de			○											
BE nl	○		○		○		○		○		○			
BG	○				○		○		○					
CZ	○		○		○		○		○		○		○	
DK	○		○		○		○		○		○		○	
DE	○		○		○		○				○			
EE	○		○		○		○		○					
IE						▲				▲				
EL		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲
ES		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲
FR		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		
HR		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲
IT	○		○		○		○		○		○		○	
CY	○		○		○		○		○		○		○	
LV		▲		▲				▲		▲				
LT										▲				
LU	○		○		○		○		○		○		○	
HU	○		○		○		○		○		○		○	
MT	○		○		○		○		○		○		○	
NL			○		○									
AT	○	▲	○	▲			○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		
PL	○		○		○		○		○					
PT		▲		▲		▲		▲						▲
RO	○		○		○		○		○		○			
SI	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲
SK	○		○		○		○		○		○			
FI	○		○		○		○		○		○		○	
SE	○		○		○		○		○					
AL	○				○		○		○					
BA			○		○		○		○					
CH	○		○		○		○		○		○		○	
IS	○		○		○		○		○		○		○	
LI	○	▲			○	▲					○	▲	○	▲
ME		▲		▲										
MK		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲
NO		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲
RS	○		○		○		○							
TR	○		○						○					

EC ○ = In existing curricula.

CR ▲ = In recent curriculum revisions.

## Chapter 6: Promoting targeted learning and social-emotional support

**Table 6.1A: Top-level policies and measures on identifying students' learning and social-emotional support needs, 2022/2023 – data by country**

Education system	Guidance/counselling services for assessing learning and/or social-emotional needs	Assessment procedures for determining SEN	Guidelines/tools for assessing learning needs (including social-emotional barriers)	Specific guidelines/tools for assessing social-emotional needs	Diagnostic national tests	Specific guidelines/tools for assessing language competences	Local/school autonomy
BE fr	✓			✓	✓		
BE de	✓	✓					
BE nl	✓	✓		✓			
BG	✓	✓					
CZ	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
DK							✓
DE	✓	✓				✓	
EE		✓	✓				
IE			✓		✓		
EL	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
ES	✓	✓		✓			
FR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
HR				✓			
IT		✓			✓		
CY	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
LV		✓	✓				
LT	✓	✓					
LU	✓	✓					
HU	✓	✓	✓		✓		
MT	✓	✓	✓	✓			
NL							✓
AT	✓	✓				✓	
PL	✓	✓	✓	✓			
PT	✓		✓	✓			
RO			✓				
SI	✓						
SK	✓						
FI	✓	✓	✓	✓			
SE	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
AL	✓						
BA							✓
CH		✓					
IS							✓
LI	✓		✓				
ME		✓		✓			
MK			✓				
NO	✓				✓		
RS	✓		✓				
TR		✓		✓			



**Table 6.3A: Student groups addressed by targeted top-level policies and measures on learning and social-emotional support, 2022/2023 – data by country**

Education system	Students with SEN/disabilities		Refugee students		Migrant students		Ethnic minority students		Students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds		Girls/boys		LGBTIQ+ students		Religious minority students		General support for all students		Local/school autonomy		
	LS ○	SES △	LS ○	SES △	LS ○	SES △	LS ○	SES △	LS ○	SES △	LS ○	SES △	LS ○	SES △	LS ○	SES △	LS ○	SES △	LS ○	SES △	
BE fr	○																○	△			
BE de	○				○															△	
BE nl	○		○		○		○		○		○			△		△	○	△			
BG	○	△	○		○		○		○								○				
CZ	○	△	○	△	○	△			○	△							○	△			
DK																	○			△	
DE	○	△	○	△	○																
EE	○		○		○												○	△			
IE	○		○		○		○		○	△							○				
EL	○	△	○	△	○	△		△	○	△							○	△			
ES	○		○				○		○								○	△			
FR	○		○		○				○		○	△		△			○	△			
HR		△					○										○	△			
IT	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△					○				
CY	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△							○	△			
LV	○		○	△			○	△	○	△									△		
LT	○				○														△		
LU																	○	△			
HU	○	△							○	△									△		
MT	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△			
NL																			○	△	
AT	○		○	△	○		○										○	△			
PL	○		○		○		○		○										△		
PT	○		○		○		○		○								○	△			
RO	○						○		○											△	
SI	○		○		○		○										○	△			
SK	○	△	○	△			○	△	○	△							○	△			
FI	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△	○	△							○	△			
SE	○	△			○	△	○		○	△							○	△			
AL																	○	△			
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LI																	○	△			
ME	○	△					○														
MK	○						○		○												
NO	○																○	△			
RS	○		○		○		○												△		
TR																	○	△			

LS ○ = Policies/measures on (targeted) learning support.

SES △ = Policies/measures on (targeted) social-emotional support.

## Chapter 7: Teaching staff and teacher training to promote diversity and inclusion

**Table 7.2A: Teacher competences related to diversity and inclusion promoted through top-level competence frameworks for ITE and/or top-level CPD programmes, 2022/2023 – data by country**

Education system	Teaching students with SEN/ disabilities		Differentiating teaching and assessment to address diverse learning needs		Understanding principles of inclusion and non-discrimination		Collaborating with other teachers, education support staff, professionals and families		Implementing individualised teaching strategies		Teaching in multicultural or multilingual settings		Awareness of bias and stereotypes		No relevant top-level competence framework for ITE	No relevant CPD programmes provided or supported by top-level education authorities
	ITE	CPD	ITE	CPD	ITE	CPD	ITE	CPD	ITE	CPD	ITE	CPD	ITE	CPD		
BE fr		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲	○	▲		
BE de	○	▲	○		○		○		○							
BE nl	○	▲	○	▲		▲	○		○		○			▲		
BG	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		▲		
CZ	○	▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		
DK	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		
DE	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		
EE	○	▲	○	▲		▲	○	▲	○	▲		▲		▲		
IE	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		
EL		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲	○	
ES	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		
FR	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		
HR	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		
IT	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		
CY	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		▲		▲		▲	○	▲		
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LU			○	▲	○	▲			○	▲	○	▲				
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SK	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○		○	▲		▲		▲	○	
FI		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲	○	
SE	○	▲	○	▲	○		○	▲	○	▲		▲	○	▲		
AL		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲	○	
BA															○	▲
CH	○		○		○		○		○		○		○			▲
IS	○		○								○					▲
LI		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲	○	
ME	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		
MK	○	▲			○	▲	○	▲			○	▲		▲		
NO	○	▲	○	▲	○	▲	○		○	▲	○	▲	○	▲		
RS		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲		▲			○	
TR	○	▲	○	▲	○		○	▲	○	▲						

ITE ○ = Promoted through top-level competence frameworks for ITE.

CPD ▲ = Promoted through top-level CPD programmes.

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# Promoting diversity and inclusion in schools in Europe

## Eurydice report

The diversity of the educational landscape is increasing; however, learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who experience discrimination or unequal treatment disproportionately underachieve in schools. Equality, equity and inclusion are fundamental principles of the European Union. They have also become key topics of the educational science discourse and a policy priority across Europe.

This report investigates national/top-level policies and measures in 39 European education systems, which address discrimination and promote diversity and inclusion in schools. It focuses in particular on targeted initiatives to support those learners who are most likely to experience disadvantage and discrimination, including girls/boys, students from different migrant, ethnic and religious backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ students and students with special educational needs or disabilities.

The findings show that relevant policies and measures in the investigated areas – monitoring, strategies, access, curricula, learning and social-emotional support, and teacher education and training – are widely present. However, they do not target all student groups equally. The report also highlights areas where policies and measures can be further developed.

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The Eurydice Network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is coordinated by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). For more information about Eurydice, see: <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu>.



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