

Salamanca - 15 years on INCLUSION – A SCHOOL FOR ALL



The Council of Europe and its view on Inclusive Education

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Dublin, 12th November 2009

CoE Disability Action Plan

At the Second Conference of Ministers responsible for integration policies for people with disabilities, held in May 2003, Ministers adopted the Malaga Ministerial Declaration on People with Disabilities, entitled “Progressing towards full participation as citizens”.

The declaration concludes that our main aim in the next decade should be to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families, putting the emphasis on their integration and full participation in society, since an accessible society in which everyone participates is of benefit to the whole population.

CoE Disability Action Plan

An appropriate strategy was devised to draw up the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 with the aim of promoting human rights and improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe.

We wish to take this opportunity, therefore, to focus your attention on the education of people with disabilities.

Special Needs Education in Europe

Education is a basic factor in ensuring social inclusion and independence for all people in adult life, including those with disabilities.

To ensure that all children with disabilities, irrespective of the nature and degree of their impairment, have equal access to education, and develop their personality, creativity and their intellectual and physical abilities to their full potential, they must enjoy the same rights – under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – and have the same opportunities as other children.

Special Needs Education in Europe

Education should cover all life stages from pre-school education to vocational training, and include life long learning.

Given Europe's desire to achieve optimum social cohesion, it seems sensible to embrace the fundamental ethical position taken by UNESCO, which may be summed up as "Education for All".

Special Needs Education in Europe

Historical milestones in the Council of Europe's position and approach with regard to education policies for people with disabilities

The Council of Europe subscribes to the view that policies for people with disabilities should be based on equal opportunities, independence, self-determination and active participation in all areas of community life. Achieving this objective requires us to take a cross-sectoral approach to disability policy at every level.

Special Needs Education in Europe

This view is reflected in numerous documents adopted by the Council of Europe, in particular:

- Recommendation No. R (92) 6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on “A coherent policy for people with disabilities” adopted following the final declaration of the ad hoc Conference of Ministers responsible for Policies on People with Disabilities, held in Paris on 7 and 8 November 1991;
- the Revised European Social Charter;
- Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005)
- Recommendation Rec(2006)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society: improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015.



Special Needs Education in Europe

The current tendency in Europe is to develop a policy towards inclusion of students with special educational needs (SEN) into mainstream schools.

Special Needs Education in Europe

BUT some States in Europe continue to discriminate and not take account in their policies, strategies and programmes people with disabilities, especially in what concerns a mainstream education.

It will be impossible to achieve the full development as no one in society may be excluded from this process.

Special Needs Education in Europe

According to the recently approved **UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities** the states should make all the efforts in order to guarantee that people with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability.

Special Needs Education in Europe

Education must be inclusive and accessible to all, in law as well as in fact.

Education is an inalienable human right.

To become effective, education must be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to all.

Special Needs Education in Europe

In this context, the **CoE Disability Action Plan** states in its Action Line 4 (Education) that the main objectives of the European Countries should be to ensure access to mainstream education

Special Needs Education in Europe

The main challenges for the CoE MS will be:

- The position of pupils with special needs within mainstream schools and the quality of services provided to them
- Inclusion at the level of secondary education
- Implementation of individual education plans and facilitate a co-ordinated approach to education provision throughout and towards employment
- enable the early appropriate assessment of the special educational needs of disabled children, young people and adults to inform their educational provision and planning

Special Needs Education in Europe

- Encourage and support the development of a unified education system, including mainstream and specialised educational provision
- Development of initial and ongoing training for all professionals and staff working across all phases of education to incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate educational techniques and materials to support disabled pupils and students where appropriate
- Educational material and schemes provided through the general educational system are accessible to persons with disabilities
- Ensure that parents of disabled children are active partners in the process of the development of the individualised education plans of their children

Special Needs Education in Europe

Conclusion:

Educational system within countries should clearly state inclusion is a goal. States should lead to the provision of facilities that enhance developments and processes working towards inclusion.

For the process of implementation of inclusive and mainstream education, the States should make very clear what the goals of the policy are to all members belonging to the educational community.

Special Needs Education in Europe

Educational policy and system should take account the needs of all people with disabilities in the planning, financing, monitoring and evaluation of all education strategies with the aim of promoting mainstream and inclusion in order to meet individual learners' needs within all educational sectors.

The main goal of inclusive education should be a school with good learning results where all are participating and treated equally. It is important to recognise that inclusive education is a constant process in which education really is for all.

Special Needs Education in Europe

**“Everyone has the right to Education”
(Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 26)**