

# Inclusion and education in European countries

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Final report: 3. Discussion and recommendations



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# 1 The EU's responsibility for inclusion and education

## 1.1 Statutory or possibly statutory responsibilities of the EU

The statutory tasks of the EU with regard to education are settled in article 149 of the European Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. According to article 149, the Community should contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action. The Community aims specifically to develop the European dimension in education and the exchange of information on issues common to education systems in the Member States. The Charter is referring at several points to the fundamental rights in relation to youth and education, namely the right of (compulsory) education (article 14), the right of non-discrimination (article 21), respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity (article 22), equality of men and women (articles 23), the rights of the child (article 24), the right of integration for persons with disabilities (article 26).

No further EU-legislation was apparently needed for article 149 or for the relevant articles in the Charter. The Member States and their educational authorities are expected to settle and arrange education etc. accordingly and appropriately in their Constitution and laws. The roles of the European Commission and other European agents and institutions were therefore to be restricted to support, predominantly in the frame of the open method of co-ordination that was developed in line with the Lisbon Strategy.

However, there is good reason to reconsider the restricted role of the EU and its institution at two points. The reasons will be explained. The EU's task could be 'statutory', forcing the EU and its institutions to take up a more directive role, beyond the open method of co-ordination.

The first point regards the halving of the number of early school leavers between 2000 and 2010, as agreed by the EU Member States in the Presidency's statement on the Lisbon Strategy of 23-24 March 2000.<sup>1</sup>

The second point regards landmark judgment of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights against special Roma schools in the Czech Republic of 13 November 2007.

### 1.1.1 Halving early school leaving in the EU, Lisbon Strategy 2000-2010

In the Lisbon Strategy Document (Presidency of the European Council, 2000 March), the European Council has stated that too many young people, who enter the labour market, have not passed the level that is required for Europe as the most competitive knowledge economy in the world. The level should be at least that of a qualified worker with the proved capacities of ISCED-level 3C. The

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<sup>1</sup> In recent documents the Commission is referring to a reduction of early school leaving to 10% in 2010, in relation to the low reduction pace between 2000 and 2007 (European Commission, 2008). It is 2.4% above the original target. For matters of convenience we will keep to the original target of 'halving' in the text. One should read: reduction to 10%.

numbers, identified as early school leavers by the European Commission and EUROSTAT, were to be halved in the decade between 2000 and 2010. As stated in Presidency conclusion 26: “The European Council accordingly calls upon the Member States, in line with their constitutional rules, the Council and the Commission to take the necessary steps within their areas of competence to meet the following targets:

- (...)
- the number of 18 to 24 years olds with only lower-secondary level education who are not in further education and training should be halved by 2010;
- Etc.”<sup>2</sup>

*In that sense, halving early school leaving is declared to be a top-priority in Europe.*

The wording and the signature of the Presidency and all Heads of State were clear and referred to a binding target for the EU Member States. The further declaration and its context in 2000 embedded the priority in a wider set of aims and targets, but the EU would not take direct statutory responsibility for it. The direct statutory responsibility was left to the Member States. The EU’s institutions would support the Member States by the open method of co-ordination, which will be discussed below.

However, the wording and the state of the reduction at two third of the timeline may lead to another position. In 2007, the reduction was still far below the level needed for halving early school leaving in 2010 (see final report, chapter 2 for the details). It would need a clear re-assurance on behalf of the Member States and more directive responsibility of the EU’s institutions to reach the target of halved early school leaving in 2010, or shortly thereafter.

*From his independent position the author recommends the EU and its key institutions to accept a more statutory responsibility for the reduction of early school leaving in the nearest future, taking into consideration the Lisbon target of halving early school leaving between 2000 and 2010, on the one side, and the low achievements in most Member States since 2000, on the other. He also recommends to giving special attention to the skewed distribution of early school leaving between countries and regions.*

The targets, pace and the development and implementation of appropriate strategies and action plans for the reduction of early school leaving were to be reconfirmed by the Presidency and the Member States. The relevant national, regional and educational authorities should develop and implement strategies and action plans. The strategies and action plans were to be reported to the European Commission. The Commission should hold the authority to adapt inappropriate strategies and plans, representing the statutory responsibility of the EU for halved early school leaving. It would go beyond European co-operation and action in the frame of the open method of coordination, on the one side, and the

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<sup>2</sup> In recent documents the Commission is referring to a reduction of early school leaving to 10% in 2010, in relation to the low reduction pace between 2000 and 2007 (European Commission, 2008). It is 1.3% above the original target. For matters of convenience we will keep to the original target of ‘halving’ in the text. One should read: reduction to 10%.

applicable mid-term EU programs such as the educational program Lifelong Learning and the structural funds, on the other (see under).

For further discussion and recommendations concerning the reduction of early school leaving, see chapter 4.

### 1.1.2 The Grand Chamber's rule concerning Roma schools

Recently, the European countries were challenged whether the right of non-discrimination was guaranteed or not. Although in the frame of the Council of Europe, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights reached a landmark judgment against special Roma schools in the Czech Republic (Council of Europe, European Court of Human Rights, Grand Chamber, 2007 November 13). The Court ruled that outplacement and segregation of Roma students in special schools is a form of unlawful discrimination that violates fundamental human rights. For the Commission staff it was too early to assess the impact of the consequences of the Grand Chamber's judgment (Commission staff, 2008 July). In the national reports of e.g. Hungary we have seen that national policies of segregating Roma students into special schools has been changed, step by step, and that interesting measures were taken to encourage and enhance the inclusion of Roma students in mainstream education.

Maybe it is still too early to assess the consequences of the Grand Chamber's judgment, but it is to be taken into consideration that the outplacement in special schools represents unlawful discrimination against young Roma and their families. For the judges it made no difference whether the outplacement was intentionally discriminatory or not. Students and their families should have access to mainstream education and to appropriate support measures in mainstream education. Otherwise, they are effectively segregated and therefore discriminated.

Through the judgment, the European institutions are challenged to take statutory responsibility against the outplacement mechanisms towards special education. In case of the Roma, the European institutions are presumably forced to forbid such outplacement, to counter-act and to control possible outplacement practices and rules in the Member States.

*The author recommends the EU's institutions to come to conclusions on the impact of the Grand Chamber's judgment. The conclusion may regard, for instance:*

-  *The formal obligations of the Member States,*
-  *Targeted support for the inclusion of Roma pupils in mainstream education,*
-  *Further promotion of awareness and knowledge on good policies and practices,*
-  *Etc.*

It would be likely that the same or a comparable judgment might apply to other groups that were segregated and therefore discriminated in an equal or comparable way, i.e. by outplacement in special classes and schools. Pupils and families may raise serious complaints against schools and/or authorities whose predominant practice was or still is to outplace the pupils in a special classes and schools on behalf of their group-related characteristics and their cultural identity. It may regard children with a handicap, disability or special need, boys or girls, a national minority, children from travelling or sailing families, immigrant

minority children labelled as 'coloured' or 'black', as in The Netherlands, for 'bad boys' and 'bad girls', etc. It may therefore regard all kinds of special 'out-door' classes and schools that were mentioned in national reports and further documentation.

*Therefore, the author also recommends the EU's institutions to reconsider the impact of the Grand Chamber's judgment on other practices of outplacement, segregation and discrimination.*

Further discussion and recommendations will follow in the chapters 5 and 6 on priority education measures and inclusive education measures, respectively.

## **1.2 The Commission's open method of co-ordination**

The open method of coordination (OMC) has been defined as an instrument of the Lisbon strategy (Europa Glossary). The open method of coordination provided a new framework for cooperation between the Member States, whose national policies could thus be directed towards certain common objectives. Under this intergovernmental method, the Member States are evaluated by one another (peer pressure), with the Commission's role being limited to surveillance. The European Parliament and the Court of Justice played virtually no part in the open method of coordination process.

The open method of coordination is applied in areas, which fall within the competence of the Member States, such as employment, social protection, social inclusion, education, youth and training.

It is based principally on:

- ✚ Jointly identifying and defining objectives to be achieved (adopted by the Council);
- ✚ Jointly established measuring instruments (statistics, indicators, guidelines);
- ✚ Benchmarking, i.e. comparison of the Member States' performance and exchange of best practices (monitored by the Commission).

Depending on the areas concerned, the open method of coordination involves so-called "soft law" measures which are binding for the Member States in varying degrees but which never take the form of directives, regulations or decisions. Thus, in the context of the Lisbon strategy, the open method of coordination requires the Member States to draw up national reform plans and to forward them to the Commission.

Education is part of the drive to achieve the goals of the Lisbon Strategy to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world. In this context, the Commission has stepped up policy cooperation in the field of education, particularly through the open method of coordination (Europa Glossary).

### **1.2.1 Open methods of co-ordination through PLA-clusters**

For educational issues, the peer pressure mentioned above is taking place through peer learning activities at and around peer cluster meetings on topical issues. 'Peers' are the above-mentioned Member States and their representatives. The meetings and the learning is coordinated and supported by the educa-

tion units of the European Commission. In recent years, peer clusters and peer learning activities regarded:

1. Information and Communication Technology (ICT),
2. Access and Social Inclusion,
3. Key Competences,
4. Making best use of resources,
5. Math, Science and Technology (MST),
6. Modernisation of Higher Education,
7. Recognition of Learning Outcomes,
8. Teachers and Trainers.

Reports of their meeting are published on the lifelong learning web-site (Knowledge System for Lifelong Learning).

Most relevant for inclusion issues in education were the meetings and reports of the PLA-cluster 'Access and Inclusion'. Between October 2006 and December 2008 seven meetings have been reported, namely:

1. October 2006, Brussels, on positive discrimination and migrant education,
2. January 2007, Dublin, on measures against early school leaving,
3. April 2007, Hungary, on (de)segregation in education,
4. November 2007, Paris, on policies for equal opportunities in education,
5. January 2008, Ireland, on adult literacy,
6. October 2008, Basque country, on learning communities,
7. December 2008, Stockholm, on preschool education in Sweden.

The meetings have seen the intervention of high level academics and of representatives of relevant stakeholders. The cluster has constituted a key building block for the preparation of the green paper on "Migration and mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems", published by the Commission on 3 July 2008 (Commission of the European Community, 2008 July 03; Commission staff, 2008 July 3). The work on early school leaving will be summarized in a Handbook on the subject, to be published by early 2009.

The other most relevant Peer Learning Cluster regards that on Teachers and Trainers, including its sub-cluster on Vocational Education and Training.

Highest attention in the reports of the Peer Learning Activities is given to two points that were listed above as an aim of the open method of coordination, namely:

1. Jointly identifying and defining objectives to be achieved,
2. The exchange of best practices as revealed by invited experts and national representatives.

### **1.2.2 Improved open methods of co-ordination**

*The author recommends the Commission and the Member States to take into consideration possible improvements of the open method of coordination in relation to inclusion and education.*

Possible improvements may regard the points that have received already high attention, i.e. the points of the objectives and the best practices, as well as the at-

tention points that received less attention so far, i.e. joint measuring instruments and comparative benchmarking.

### 1.2.2.1 Further PLA-meetings and PLA-like meetings

The Peer Learning Activities have been taken up as the key instrument of the open method of coordination in the field of education. Our five key issues and frames of inclusion and education would be appropriate and welcome issues for special PLA-meetings or other meetings with experts and national representatives. It would regard special meetings on:

- ✚ Reduction of early school leaving,
- ✚ Priority education measures,
- ✚ Inclusive education measures
- ✚ Safe education measures
- ✚ Teacher support measures.

For the countries with a decentralised educational system and authority, such as Germany, Spain and the UK, the key actors for educational policies and strategies are not reached directly. The key actors are the representatives of the regional ministries of education. They are to be reached via the national representative, who is participating the Peer learning Activities. However well these representatives may disseminate the 'lessons learned' to the regions, it would be in line with the modus operandi of the open method of co-ordination and the Peer Learning Activities to encourage direct participation of the responsible regional representatives.

*The author recommends this direct participation of the regions for the countries, where the educational system and authority have been decentralised, with rather restricted responsibility for the national government and ministry.*

It would increase the value of the Peer Learning Activities and the lessons learned and it would shorten the lines of communication and dissemination between 'Brussels', the countries and the regions. Numbers of participants may increase considerably, but not to an unmanageable level one may assume.

There remains an unsolved point, however. The mechanism of peer pressure and peer learning should have a much wider impact than that of the responsible national and regional authorities in the Member States. It should also involve the local authorities, the educational authorities, the schools, the teachers and other relevant and interested actors with regard to inclusion and education. This point cannot be solved by enormous European conferences, e.g. on good practices with regard to inclusion and education, organised by the European Commission. The Commission may sponsor and continue to sponsor such conferences that are taking place on behalf of international and European NGOs or associations, such as the conference of Inclusion Europe on 'inclusive education' in Vienna in April 2008.

*The author recommends the Commission to sponsor and to continue to sponsor wider conferences on inclusion and education.*

The national and regional participants in the Peer Learning Activities may take the initiative for national and regional Peer Learning Activities with local and educational authorities, schools, teachers and other relevant or interested actors. In these ways the 'lessons learned' should be disseminated and find access to all concerned.

*Therefore, the author recommends the Commission and the participants in the Peer Learning Activities to extend this open method of coordination to the national and regional level.*

By extending the reach of the Peer learning Activities the Commission and the participants will improve the dissemination of the lessons learned on inclusion and education. In the section below further recommendations will follow on reinforced and improved dissemination mechanisms in the field.

### **1.2.2.2 Knowledge management**

The different aims of the open method of coordination and the peer learning activities are closely linked to the acquisition and dissemination of relevant knowledge on inclusion and education. That regards, in general terms, specialised information, i.e. information on quite 'specific' issues for specifically interested users and audiences, many of them being able and willing to process information academically. Key functions with regard to specialised information regard the selection and finding of relevant materials, as well as the production and distribution of these in consumable forms, i.e. forms and formats that are apparently appreciated by the targeted users and audiences. Targeted users and audiences for the Commission's open method of coordination are 'experts' and 'representatives' in the field of inclusive policies in education. However, a much wider circle of users and audiences were to be served too, such as grass-root practitioners in schools, parents and pupils faced with early school leaving or with exclusion and discrimination, etc. Even if grey reports, full-text sites and downloadable reports and brochures would be appreciated by a number of 'experts' and 'representatives', many of them as well as most other users and audiences would appreciate a clear and convincing selection of relevant materials, in combination features, reports, sites, brochures, etc. that are written, designed and produced well.

On behalf of the Commission, the website [kslll.net](http://kslll.net) is available as well as the Europa-websites for the production and dissemination of relevant knowledge (Knowledge System for Lifelong Learning). Major 'pieces' of relevant research and knowledge on inclusion issues are available at the Commission, on behalf of Commission assignments. On assignment of the Commission it regards, among others, the report of Friedrich Heckmann on education and migration (Heckmann, 2008 April) and that of Helen Penn on early childhood education and care (Penn, 2009 June). The present study and its reports are also becoming part of it. Yet, these sites and publications cannot cover more than the proverbial tip of the available and relevant iceberg that consists of many (grey) reports, sites, publications and e-publications that interested actors in the field may retrieve or to which they may have subscribed.

Relevant knowledge and materials from open sources are manifold. It regards specialised information, and therefore a substantial part of it regards academic

knowledge and materials. The academic materials include national and international or comparative research. Further: statistical materials, indicators, reports, etc. These have been consulted for the present, study, although there is always the risk of a missed report, publication, or piece of relevant information, or that of publications with a restricted circulation. Besides, research is a time-consuming effort, often, meaning that relevant knowledge is not always available in real time or in due course. Distribution is scattered and often informal, particularly for grey literature and reports as well as for work in progress.

In addition, features in mass media often report on important pilots, good practices and trends, somewhere in Europe. Although most media are present on the Internet, it needs still great efforts and local 'translators' to keep reasonable track of relevant media coverage.

For the reinforcement and possibly the improvement of the open method of co-ordination and its knowledge function the author recommends the Commission to ensure that effective measures and good practices are translated, discussed and published on kslll.net, as announced, with links to other sites, as appropriate. Further, the production and distribution of books, brochures and other easy-access materials with regard to effective measures and good practices is needed.

*As to ascertain best knowledge management, a specialised European knowledge centre for inclusion and education would offer welcome added value. The author recommends to establishing a knowledge centre for the management of relevant knowledge on inclusion and education. Its functions should be to find, select, process and sort out the relevant materials on inclusion and education, and then to produce and to distribute these in the most appropriate ways for targeted users and audiences.*

*A similar initiative is recommended at the national or regional level, i.e. the establishment and operation of national and regional knowledge centres for inclusion and education. Together with the European centre these centres should form an operational network of knowledge centres in the field.*

Further discussion and recommendations will follow in the chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 on four topical issues of inclusion and education: reduction of early school leaving, priority education, inclusive education and safe education. Discussion and recommendation for teacher support will follow in chapter 3.

### **1.3 Current funds and programs**

With regard to inclusion and education, several EU programs offer opportunities for direct EU funding of projects, measures, innovative action, targeted R&D and/or reinforcement of the European dimension or European co-operation. It regards programs that are part of the EU's mid-term budgets. At present, it regards the EU budget for 2007-2013. The minor part of the subsidies is allocated by European agencies, while most of these are allocated by national agencies of the relevant EU programs in relation to national priorities as agreed with the Commission.

On behalf of the priorities and rules for EU support per program, on the one side, and subsidies as allocated, nationally or by European agencies, on the other, the following programs are relevant for 'inclusion and education':

1. The Lifelong Learning program,
2. The Research Framework program,
3. The structural funds,
4. DAPHNE, YOUTH and CULTURE,
5. Maybe other programs.

### 1.3.1 The Lifelong Learning program

The Lifelong Learning program represents the EU-program for projects etc. to enhance European educational aims. Its overarching priority is the reinforcement of the contribution made by education and training to achieving the Lisbon goal of making the EU the most competitive knowledge-based economy. The program counts four sub-programs, i.e. those for (1) school education (COMENIUS), (2) vocational education and training (LEONARDO DA VINCI), (3) adult education (GRUNDTVIG) and (4) tertiary education (ERASMUS). The study on 'inclusion and education' regards primary and secondary education. Therefore, the COMENIUS-part and the LEONARDO-part are directly relevant. GRUNDTVIG is relevant in as far as it regards e.g. the transition from school to work and the later training and education of early school leavers. Their European and national priorities and aims, present and past, reflect or can reflect the different issues related to inclusion and education, although in varying degrees.

Relevant priority areas for action in 2007 were, among others (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2006 December 20):

- ✚ To strengthen the role of education and training within the Lisbon process (...),
- ✚ To improve the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training (...) and to promote recognition of non-formal and informal learning,
- ✚ To improve the low levels of participation in adult learning in many Member States which are an obstacle to employment and people's capacity to adapt to rapidly changing working environments,
- ✚ To promote greater efficiency and equity in education and training systems, particularly high-quality provisions for the disadvantaged and high-quality pre-school approaches,
- ✚ To improve the quality of education and training staff, in particular of teachers and trainers.

In 2007, special priority was given to projects promoting the intercultural dialogue, in relation to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. Intercultural education regards a set of strategies and measures to improve the cultural relations in classes and schools. These are applied, in varying degrees, in the ten countries, as was discussed in the chapter on priority education of the final report. Cases mentioned there regarded those in Italian cities and regions, in particular. Lifelong Learning projects under the said priority may have offered and may continue to offer the funds needed for intercultural priority measures. The Commission's staff has referred to seven projects in this frame in its working

document of 3 July 2008 on migration and mobility (Commission staff, 2008 July 3).

Priorities of COMENIUS, LEONARDO and GRUNDTVIG are referring, directly or indirectly, to inclusion strategies, measures and practices. These priorities regard:

- ✚ Getting or keeping aboard pupils and young people at risk of exclusion and discrimination,
- ✚ Multilingual competencies,
- ✚ Strengthening the competencies of teachers and staff with regard to pupils at risk of exclusion and discriminations,
- ✚ Reinforcement of the access to the teaching professions for students and young people from disadvantaged groups,
- ✚ Support for educational networks for e.g. the involvement of parents, for better (inclusive) special needs education, for best intercultural education, for strengthened transitions between school and the world of work,
- ✚ Key competences of lifelong learning,
- ✚ Exploring culture and education, promoting interculturalism and supporting integration of migrants into society,
- ✚ Adult education for marginalised or disadvantaged citizens.

It should be noticed that ‘inclusion issues’ were not clearly indicated among the priorities of LEONARDO. Its priorities referred to ‘mobility’ of students and staff, and the transfer and development of innovation. LEONARDO and its target groups regard the educational sector of vocational education and training. In most countries, most young people are prepared for their start on the labour market there, and among its pupils we have found the largest number of early school leavers and pupils at risk of early school leaving. These regard clear ‘Lisbon issues’. Therefore, clear links between the LEONARDO-part of the Lifelong Learning program and the reinforcement of the Lisbon process would be needed, both at the European level and at that of European LEONARDO-networks and national agencies.

*Therefore, the author recommends the Commission and the Member States to reconsider the priorities of LEONARDO in relation to the reinforcement of the Lisbon process in general and the reduction of early school leaving in particular.*

Apart from the intercultural projects mentioned above, only a few cases and projects, which came to our knowledge during the past research project, have received Lifelong Learning funding. One may assume that the program is under-used for the inclusion purposes.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In 2009, the Commission’s staff listed ‘school partnerships’ for ‘employability measures’ in one country: Hungary. It listed priority measures in Belgium-Flemish Community, Belgium-German Community, Estonia, Spain, Hungary, The Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, Norway and Turkey. It listed ‘inclusive’ measures for special needs education in Belgium-Flemish Community, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, The Netherlands, Slovenia and the UK.

### 1.3.2 The Research Framework program<sup>4</sup>

The Research Framework program of the Commission's DG for Research offers mid-term funding to excellent European research projects and networks in the humanities and social sciences. The program's calls refer and referred to educational research under the general heading of Civil Society. Nineteen educational research projects have received funding of the Commission since 2001 (European Commission, Directorate-General for Research, 2009). Among these is the INCLUD-ED project on Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education, as well as other research projects that are focussed on inclusion and cohesion issues – KATARSIS,<sup>5</sup> PROFIT,<sup>6</sup> EMILIA,<sup>7</sup> YIPPEE.<sup>8</sup> Some projects are targeted at knowledge and skills, being the pillars of the Lisbon Strategy to strengthen the European knowledge-based economy, such as REFLEX,<sup>9</sup> Lifelong Learning 2010,<sup>10</sup> EUEREK.<sup>11</sup> Some projects are targeted at citizenship in general and culture, youth, education and migration, in particular e.g. INTERACT,<sup>12</sup> EMILIE,<sup>13</sup> REDCO,<sup>14</sup> EDUMIGROM,<sup>15</sup> EUMARGINS.<sup>16</sup> In addition, two relevant academic networks received support, namely SINCERE<sup>17</sup> and TRIPL-E DOSE.<sup>18</sup> Beyond the new pathways, theories and methodologies of 'education science', the research projects and networks should improve and enlarge the knowledge base regarding inclusion and education. As stated above: this knowledge base is a specialised knowledge base, with a high and necessary level of academic involvement and the involvement of professionals, stakeholders and other relevant actors, who apparently need a full academic qualification. Therefore, best European research projects and networks may represent a necessity for 'inclusion and education' and its (specialised) knowledge base.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In addition to the current Research Framework program for 2007-2013 also projects that were funded under the preceding programs may deserve attention, for two reasons. First, some earlier projects have a run-time up to 2011 or 2012. Second, the life-cycle of scientific knowledge is assumed to be rather long, both with regard to the case studies, indicators and further evidence that has been delivered on the basis of current research, and with regard to the clarification, explanation, interpretations and understanding of relevant phenomena, in case those concerning inclusion strategies, measures and practices in education.

<sup>5</sup> Growing inequality and social innovation: alternative knowledge and practice in overcoming social exclusion in Europe.

<sup>6</sup> Policy responses overcoming factors in the intergenerational transmission of inequalities.

<sup>7</sup> Empowerment of mental health service users: lifelong learning, integration and action.

<sup>8</sup> Young people from a public care background: pathways to education in Europe.

<sup>9</sup> The flexible professional in the knowledge society.

<sup>10</sup> Towards a lifelong learning society in Europe: the contribution of the education system.

<sup>11</sup> European universities for entrepreneurship.

<sup>12</sup> Intercultural active citizenship education.

<sup>13</sup> A European approach to multicultural citizenship: legal, political and educational challenges.

<sup>14</sup> Religion in education. A contribution to dialogue or a factor of conflict in transforming societies of European countries?

<sup>15</sup> Ethnic differences in education and diverging prospects for urban youth in an enlarged Europe.

<sup>16</sup> On the margins of the European Community – Young adult immigrants in seven European countries.

<sup>17</sup> Supporting international network and cooperation in educational research.

<sup>18</sup> Days of socio-economy: education, employment, Europe.

<sup>19</sup> The academic feed-in in the knowledge base is not limited to that the FP6 and FP7 projects and networks. Apart from these, national and international research centres, at universities, in learned associations and networks, etc. are giving important and most valuable contributions

No or only a few cases and projects that came to our knowledge were related to wider academic projects and networks funded by the Research Framework.

It would not be in line with the program and its history to recommend one or more European research programs that are to be targeted at inclusion and education on behalf of some top-down assignment. Most academics do not expect an optimal contribution to the knowledge base on behalf of top-down targeted research assignments. For them, the optimal contribution is to be reinforced by academic freedom in combination with quality competition.

It is apparently a challenge for the academics and the academic community to leave the proverbial ivory tower of science, universities and research institutes. Some may escape from it through their commitment to action research that should clearly contribute to improved living conditions in general and learning conditions in particular of local disadvantaged or discriminated groups. Others may actively participate in progressive associations, nationally or locally, and participate in political debate. Both 'positions' were represented in the INTMEAS consortium, as were commitments as expert advisers and consultants.

For the RESEARCH program, the Commission is giving high priority to the dissemination of research outcomes and publications. The consortia are requested to set out their dissemination plans as part of their project and its follow up. The Commission may assign meta-studies on certain issues, and it is running accompanying measures that should ascertain the effective dissemination of project finding etc. among wider circles and interested audiences in society. The Commission endorsed the participation of interested groups in the funded projects – in case: pupils at (high) risk of exclusion, grass-root practitioners, educational and local authorities, etc.

*The author has recommended the establishment of a European knowledge centre for the processing and dissemination of relevant information on inclusion and education. One of its functions should be to reinforce and to improve the processing and dissemination of relevant knowledge from research.*

### **1.3.3 Structural funds**

The structural funds of the EU offer funding for national and European programs that aim at balancing the inequities of groups and/or regions and/or sectors of the economy. For the groups it regards the European Social Fund ESF and the related program PROGRESS, as well as the Integration Fund and the Fund for Regional Development. ESF and PROGRESS are targeted at all groups that apparently suffer of social exclusion, particularly on the labour market and who have stayed apart from society and the labour market for (too) long time. These are the same groups, although more adult, as the ones that are disadvantaged and at risk of exclusion and discrimination from education, such as under-qualified workers (i.e. early school leavers), Roma, travelling people, minorities, 'immigrant' youth, the socio-economic and neighbourhood disadvantaged, the gender disadvantaged, handicapped, disabled and special needs people, victims and

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too. FP6 and FP7 are aiming, however, to take a leading role in the new knowledge as needed. Most decisive synthesising contributions are expected to follow in the years ahead.

perpetrators. For ESF and PROGRESS that are led by DG Employment and national agencies it regards predominantly European citizens or third country nationals with a perspective of permanent or long-stay residence. The Integration Program that is led by DG Justice and national agencies regards projects for the integration of third country nationals, i.e. immigrant workers, asylum seekers, etc. In terms of the risks of exclusion and discrimination there is considerable overlap between the target groups of the three programs. Some national reports referred to ESF-funding for the reintegration of early school leavers and other groups at risk. In total, however, the return on aims and investment was not high as far as the groups at risk of educational and post-educational exclusion and discrimination were concerned.<sup>20</sup>

Projects for the development and reinforcement of disadvantaged and backward regions may receive funding from the European Fund for Regional Development. The fund has been applied for measures and projects to integrate Roma communities in Hungary in mainstream education. The project(s) were mentioned in the Hungarian national report and in a presentation of the Hungarian Ministry of Education at the PLA-meeting in Brussels on 26 June 2009.

*In combination with the Lifelong Learning program, ESF, PROGRESS, the Integration Fund and European Fund for regional Development offer promising opportunities for the EU-funding of inclusive strategies, measures and practices for young people at risk.*

The funding is to be spent on innovation, European co-operation and priority measures, in addition to national resources. At the moment, the share of EU-funding of ESF projects is raised temporarily up to 85%, as one of European economic crisis-measures, while timelines have been shortened for the same purpose.

*The author recommends that the combined resources for young people at risk remain available, that their co-ordination is improved when needed and that usage is promoted more widely and effectively if appropriate, e.g. in relation to under-usage.*

*The author recommends a similar combination for the LEONARDO part and the other programs. It would mean that LEONARDO should take up priorities with regard to early school leavers and other pupils and young people at risk. The latter were then to be combined with the priorities and resources of the other programs with regard to under-qualified workers (i.e. early school leavers) and other pupils and young people at risk.*

#### **1.3.4 DAPHNE, YOUTH and CULTURE**

DG Justice leads the DAPHNE program. The aim of this programme is to contribute to the protection of children, young people and women against all forms of violence. It directly refers to these groups, their school environment and forms of violence, i.e. to bullying and harassment. DG Education and Culture is leading

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<sup>20</sup> We have asked the national team leaders and the consulted experts for special attention to national projects that received ESF funding.

two separate programs for (1) YOUTH and (2) CULTURE. The first regards funding of relevant projects for young people and youth policies. The second regards the funding of relevant cultural projects and initiatives. The three programs therefore may offer funding for relevant inclusion projects in education. We have not noticed projects with DAPHNE-funding, YOUTH-funding or CULTURE-funding among the case studies and further projects that came to our knowledge.

*In combination with the Lifelong Learning program, DAPHNE, YOUTH and CULTURE may offer, however, promising opportunities for the EU-funding of inclusive strategies, measures and practices for young people at risk. The author recommends that the combined resources for young people at risk remain available, that their co-ordination is improved when needed and that usage is promoted more widely and effectively if appropriate, e.g. in relation to under-usage.*

## 2 The responsibilities of national, regional, local and educational authorities

### 2.1 The statutory responsibility of the authorities

All, or almost all, statutory responsibility concerning education is in hands of the national authorities and/or, by delegation, in that of regional, local and educational authorities. They are responsible for the aims, priorities, rules, measures, national curriculum, quality and quality assessment, examination and certification, the public budget allocations, etc. They exert the control on these responsibilities. They set and adapt the rules and arrangements, taking into consideration national democratic rules and procedures, the national constitution, high or constitutional court decisions and judgments, and international law and agreements. Until now hardly no supra-national statutory rules and arrangements were to be applied in the national context, or, in case, the regional local or educational context.<sup>21</sup> In the review and recommendations with regard to the EU's responsibilities the author has referred to two possible statutory responsibilities of the EU, i.e. points at which the EU may take up or should take up statutory responsibility. These points regarded the halving of early school leaving in the EU and the non-acceptance of Roma outplacement in special classes and schools.

The possible statutory responsibility of the EU for these issues may urge the national, regional, local and educational authorities to bring their rules and arrangements in accordance with applicable EU rules and arrangements. It is not an immediate point of attention, but *the author may recommend the national, regional, local and educational authorities to assess the implications for their rules and arrangements with regard to the reduction of early school leaving and the non-acceptance of Roma outplacement or further minority outplacement, would these represent statutory EU responsibilities.*

### 2.2 The open method of co-ordination

In line with the Lisbon strategy and its implication for education in the EU, the EU is giving support to the national authorities through the open method of co-ordination. It is expected that through the open method of co-ordination as applied, relevant models and ideas on inclusion and education will reach the national authorities. For the open method of co-ordination, the peer learning process is applied. It means that representatives of volunteering Member States are invited to participate in two- or three-day conferences. There they are receiving relevant information on policies, cases and measures as presented by experts, local authorities and organisers. They are taking notice of expert opinion and knowledge as represented by invited experts. They are discussing the les-

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<sup>21</sup> An operational exception regards the national (or regional) obligation to respond to the monitoring instruments of the EU's DG EAC and other international agencies, such as the OECD, EUROSTAT and agencies of the UN. In the review and recommendations with regard to the EU's responsibilities we have referred to two possible statutory responsibilities of the EU, i.e. points at which the EU may take up or should take up statutory responsibility.

A very fundamental exception regards the UN-rule that all minors should have access to education, including the minors without permission of stay in a country.

sons learned concerning, in case, inclusion and education in the different Member States, their regions and their schools.

One may see it as a liaison model between Europe and the authorities in the Member States. Its effectiveness is dependent on the quality of the input information, on the one side, and the participants, on the other. For the latter two points are most decisive, being their expertise and competence, on the one hand, and their national 'network', on the other. So far, there is no sign of failing quality, expertise and competence with regard to the input and the national participants in the peer learning process, although improvements are always intended and made, step by step, e.g. in relation to the increased knowledge base on inclusion and education.

One may, however, raise doubts about the effectiveness of the peer learning process and its liaison model. Actually, the national educational authorities are complex departmental organisations, or even inter-departmental organisations, with the involvement of Ministries of Education and their many directorates, as well as ministries or directorates of employment, youth care, health care, family issues, culture, immigration, integration, justice, interior governance, etc. It regards the management of complex national rules and arrangements. For single liaisons it may need strong backup networks and a wide set on connections with the relevant directorates, officers and policymakers to assure the arrival of relevant knowledge, information and lessons learned at the right places. This reflects a multi-step or multi-looped communications model. Since longer times, communication scientists have discussed the pertinent threats and distortions that may occur at each step or loop towards the next receiver.

In parallel to the liaisons model, the dissemination of relevant knowledge, information and lessons learned towards all national, regional, local and educational authorities that should share these, would need further accompanying dissemination measures. These accompanying dissemination measures might include easily accessible e-publications and sites, as well as easily accessible printed materials. As the node of it the author recommended above a European knowledge centre for inclusion and education. This centre is to be linked to national knowledge centres covering the issue of inclusion and education.

*The author has recommended the Commission to take up these improvements of the open method of co-ordination and its peer learning activities. The author recommends the national authorities to support these improvements, with the aim to reinforce the liaison function and the peer learning process between Europe and the Member States and with the aim to reinforce and improve the dissemination of relevant knowledge and information among the relevant authorities and actors. Both the Commission and the national authorities should assure that the dissemination regards a two-way process between Europe, the Member States and the grassroots of education in classes and schools.*

The model might be at double risk of threatened and blocked communications, where the national authorities may have delegated their national responsibilities to regional authorities. It may mean longer lines of communication than in centralised Member States. It may need direct involvement of 'lower' authorities, particularly in countries with full devolution, i.e. countries where the national

authorities have delegated their statutory responsibilities fully or nearly fully to regional authorities. Among our ten countries it regarded Germany (Länder), Spain and the UK. One may leave the effective dissemination of relevant knowledge and information between national authorities and lower, real authorities to the national authorities. Full involvement of the lower, real authorities in the open method of co-ordination, the peer learning activities and/or the dissemination process would, however, assure a more effective communication between European and the lower, real authorities, and vice versa.<sup>22</sup>

*Therefore, the author recommends the Commission, the national authorities and the lower, real authorities to involve the lower, real authorities directly in the open method of co-ordination, the peer learning process and/or the dissemination process.*

### 2.3 Relevant EU programs

National authorities are more or less the owners and important stakeholders of the relevant EU programs. These are, among others, Lifelong Learning, the RESEARCH Framework program, the structural funds, DAPHNE, YOUTH and CULTURE. The national authorities are consulted on the aims, means and priorities and they decide as Member States on the priorities of the programs.

The national authorities may consult their regional, local and educational authorities or relevant actors in the field, depending on national rules and arrangements. In this way, 'lower' authorities and relevant actors may exert indirect influence on the priorities of the relevant programs, however distanced and indirect.

All authorities may act as a partner in an application for the funding of a project in the field of inclusion and education, although it is not the most usual practice. Most usual partners are relevant actors that want to take new and innovative initiatives to reduce early school leaving, to improve the chances of disadvantaged pupils, to make mainstream education more inclusive, to take measures against bullying and harassment, to support teachers and staff, etc. It regards usually specific pilots and possible good practices. These can be that interesting for national, regional, local or educational authorities that they want to participate in the pilot, e.g. as pushing and helping partner in the preparatory phase of an application, as a co-funder during the run-time of a project, as an interested partner in the follow-up, after-care and further dissemination of the 'lessons learned', etc.

*The author may recommend the national, regional, local and educational authorities to find and support possibly interesting applications in the fields of inclusion and education, to take responsibility for these as a co-funder and/or to take up responsibility for the follow-up, after-care and the further dissemination of the 'lessons learned'.*

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<sup>22</sup> At points, the Commission has started to refer to the different Belgian communities with regard to education issues and the Lifelong Learning program. Other international institutions and agencies do so also for reviews and monitors, e.g. with regard to Spain and the UK.

The authorities that will do so may effectively support good measures and practices with regard to inclusion and education.

National and other authorities may promote the relevant actors to prepare and submit proposals that would be eligible for EU-funding. They take an intermediary position between Europe and its relevant programs, on the one side, and the relevant actors and stakeholders in the field, on the other.<sup>23</sup> There might be a rather strong reluctance among a number of national and other authorities, because 'promotion' might harm their neutral position in educational minefields. But others are less reluctant as applications were to serve the national, regional and local educational policies, measures and good practices that are supported widely and democratically. Besides, basic promotion represents usually the distribution and dissemination of relevant information and schemes.

*Therefore, the author may recommend the national and other authorities to promote the participation in EU programs for projects in the fields of inclusion and education, taking into consideration national restrictions with regard to information and promotion campaigns. Where appropriate, the promotion might be co-ordinated or even delegated to the national agencies for the EU programs.*

National and other authorities are not supposed to exert influence on decisions to be taken on concrete applications for funding. Depending on the programs' rules and regulations, committees consisting of representatives of the Member States may decide or co-decide on final funding lists, but the lists are prepared by the Commission and its expert evaluation panels.

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<sup>23</sup> National agencies for the relevant EU programs have a similar intermediary position. These have usually also a clear responsibility for the promotion of the programs and for the enhancement of applications.

## 3 Supporting schools, teachers and trainers

### 3.1 Keeping pupils aboard in mainstream education

All or most experts appear to agree that it needs high commitment of schools and teachers to keep the pupils aboard, who apparently are at (high) risk of leaving, exclusion, dismissal, discrimination and/or repeated classes. In the French report, two case studies have been discussed extensively on what it needs on behalf of schools and teachers. It regarded the case study on a place, where the outplacement of difficult and even most difficult pupils is not allowed (Lemoine, Guigue, & Tillard, 2009), and the one on a Freinet school that is operating in a 'challenging' priority zone (Reuter, 2009). From the Hungarian and the Slovenian report it is apparently clear that it needs highest efforts of schools, teachers and specialised Roma assistants to give Roma pupils a fair chance in mainstream education. In the Dutch report attention is paid to US literature on keeping pupils at risk of early school leaving aboard, i.e. the report of the US National research Council on 'engaging schools' (National Research Council, Institute of Medicine, 2004; Comer, 2004). Also the example of the Mozaiek School in Arnhem is worth mentioning (Muskens & Peters, 2009). Its high 'educational gain' with pupils at risk was based upon high and permanent commitment and focus of school and staff, according to the school leaders.<sup>24</sup> Also further priority examples in Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and the UK showed that commitment and focus of schools and staff is apparently the most decisive factor for the improved chances of 'immigrant' pupils and for the creation of non-discriminatory relations in education and mixed schools.

*Therefore, the general recommendation is justified that all actors, who should support schools and teachers to keep the pupils at risk aboard, must reinforce and strengthen the commitment, efforts and focus of schools and teachers, as, e.g., elaborated in the report on the 'engaging schools' and the French Freinet case.*

However general, this recommendation applies to, e.g.:

- ✚ The external consultants, curriculum advisers, teacher trainers, etc., who may exert direct or indirect influence on the schools as well as on the teachers and future teachers they are reaching and want to reach,
- ✚ Producers of curricula, courses, school materials, educational software, etc., taking into consideration the many pupils at (high) risk among the end-users of their products,
- ✚ Partners of schools from internal care teams and remedial teaching, youth work, the police and the judiciary, temporary outplacement centres, job centres, medical and paramedical professions and institutions, etc., with whom school and teachers may share the responsibility for pupils at (high) risk,
- ✚ The national, regional, local and educational authorities that develop future educational and school strategies, that are setting the rules and arrangements for educational practices as to be realised by the schools and the teachers, and that allocate the resources as needed,

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<sup>24</sup> The French Freinet example, the 'engaging school' of the National Research Council, Comer's study and ideas, and the commitment of school and staff at the Mozaiek School in Arnhem have many points in common with regard to commitment, effort, focus on pupils and their future, etc.

- ✚ The participants in the Commission's Open Method of Coordination and the Peer Learning Activities – they may want to disseminate their conclusion to the stakeholders listed above and to schools and teachers, as appropriate,
- ✚ Those who manage relevant national and international knowledge bases, and those who disseminate relevant knowledge on inclusion and education professionally,
- ✚ Etc.

*These and other relevant actors should take the commitment of schools and teachers for their pupils at (high) risk into consideration and they should pay serious attention to how they can support the schools and teachers in this respect.*

*What would such support mean in practice? It is, much to our regret, far beyond evidence-based knowledge to give clear operational guidelines – at least for the moment.*

The state of comparative research does not lead to clear operational conclusions, as was argued in the methodological annex to the final report concerning research conclusions. Doubt was also expressed whether full evidence-based knowledge would be feasible at all, now and in the future. However, the national and international knowledge bases and case studies show interesting examples of how some intended inclusion effects were reached or not under specific circumstances. The effort was made to synthesise this body of knowledge for the ten countries and for further cases as reported and documented. These examples may help other schools, teachers and trainers to improve their practices and to find new, promising packages and measures for keeping their pupils at (high) risk aboard. They may learn from the examples and adapt the practices to their own needs, opportunities, challenges and circumstances.

*For this reason, the author recommends to give highest priority to measures for establishing functional knowledge centres, both at the national and the European level, that will effectively respond to the knowledge needs of schools, teachers, teacher training centres and teacher trainers.*

## **3.2 Teacher support measures**

### **3.2.1 Additional staff**

The authorities, the schools as well as other relevant institutions may apply a wide variety of measures with regard to extra teachers and support staff. Needs and necessities are discussed in the chapters below on the reduction of early school leaving, priority education measures, inclusive education measures and safe education measures. How the additional funding is applied is to be decided at the national and the local level.

Additional staff functions include a number of professional roles for teachers and others, such as Roma assistants and Roma family co-ordinators, case managers in the schools, designated teachers, counsellors, mentors, tutors, remedial teachers, etc. In most countries these functions are still being developed and improved in practice.

*The author recommends the schools and the institutions that are involved to ascertain appropriate high school and university training and courses for the 'new staff professions'.*

They should also take appropriate measures to avoid emerging alienation between education, schools and the teaching professions, on the one side, and the 'new teaching professions', on the other. They should ascertain functional links between the teaching professions and the 'new staff professions'.

### 3.2.2 Teacher training

National and regional priorities with regard to teacher training and re-training in relation to inclusion measures targeted at pupils at (high) risk regard:

- ✚ Initial teacher training,
- ✚ In-service training, e.g. of young and new teachers or persons who decide to enter the teaching professions at a later stage of their career,
- ✚ Periodic re-training in the frame of emerging 'inclusion challenges', e.g. with regard to the teaching and guiding of early school leavers and other pupils at risk.

*The author endorses and recommends all actors involved to undertake all appropriate and necessary measures for teacher training and re-training in relation to 'inclusion and education'.*

No cases were noticed, in which EU-education funds for tertiary education or for vocational and professional education were allocated successfully for inclusion-oriented teacher training and re-training. Taking into consideration the said need of appropriate teacher training and re-training in the frame of the emerging 'inclusion challenges', *the author recommends to assess, whether and how direct or indirect EU-funding of training and re-training measures should be encouraged.*

*The author recommends as balanced training and re-training measures as possible.*

In line with the general recommendation for the (improved) open method of coordination in the field inclusion and education, *the author extends the recommendation to focussed attention for special teacher training programmes, support staff and funds for additional teachers as needed, i.e. to take these points up through:*

- ✚ Further PLA-meetings or PLA-like meetings,
- ✚ Publications and websites,
- ✚ Further books, brochures and other easy-access materials,
- ✚ The European and national knowledge centres that are focussed on inclusion and education.

So, good practice research and the dissemination of good policies and practices among teachers and other stakeholders will make a fruitful combination.

### 3.3 Points that may divert the attention

A number of points may need attention in relation to support for schools, teachers and trainers. It regards points that may divert them from the aim of keeping pupils at (high) risk aboard. The author would like to discuss the following points and measures in relation to the (feared) diversions:

- ✚ Inappropriate force and top-down communication,
- ✚ Work load and overload,
- ✚ The outplacement perspective,
- ✚ The own responsibility of parents and pupils,

✚ Non-educational disciplines, priorities and preferences.

### 3.3.1 Inappropriate force and top-down communication

Authorities are entitled to give binding instructions and orders to schools and teachers, within the domain of their authority and competence. Experts may share their expert views, knowledge and arguments with schools and teacher ‘ex cathedra’ – they speak, while the school and the teacher should listen and follow their advice, recommendations, etc. To a certain extent, force as exerted by authorities and views, or knowledge and arguments as communicated top-down by experts are real or likely, sometimes needed, unavoidable and functional.

It regards, however, a rather ‘double Dutch’ issue. The force of an authority might be rejected, for reasons of pure power conflict, for that of resistance to change, for good reason or all three together. To-down communication is known for its frequent ineffectiveness, while (smart) representatives from the floor may question the expert views, knowledge and arguments. They may come forward with convincing or even more convincing arguments and views, e.g. based upon their daily experience and general knowledge.

The issue is reinforced by the position of schools and teachers themselves. For the ‘real’ educational tasks and functions, schools and teachers have full responsibility and they hold or should hold all delegated authority for that. This regards particularly the responsibility for the implementation and realisation of education in practice. To a high degree, schools themselves are knowledge centres or centres of knowledge, where most workers, i.e. teachers and further staff, have to be highly qualified professionals, usually on behalf of a required or desirable university degree. However needed top-down authority or expertise may be, e.g. under the pressing conditions of failing schools and weak results with regard to the inclusion of pupils at (high) risk, schools and teachers will demand and will need the recognition of their own authority and expertise.

For this reason, many or even most national, regional, local and educational authorities have tried to reduce their mere exertion of authority and power. They have moved to the position of improving the facilities, resources and feedback for schools and teachers. They are leaving the realisation of general and specific educational aims and functions, e.g. with regard to the inclusion of pupils at (high) risk, to the schools and the teaching teams, in co-operation with other partners as appropriate. They moved, as far as possible, to a position similar to that of the European institutions in relation to the Lisbon Strategy, on the one hand, and the Member States, on the other. They moved to a position of applying Open Methods of Coordination, more or less.

Experts have learned or should learn to be responsive to the schools and teachers for whom their expertise would be useful. ‘Responsive’ would mean that views and arguments are not communicated ‘ex cathedra’, but that they are shared and developed in an interactive process between learning partners. Experts may represent general and comparative knowledge and views, while

schools and teachers represent the experience of 'real' teaching and the knowledge of learned professionals.<sup>25</sup>

*The author recommends authorities and experts to take the own authority and expertise of schools and teachers seriously into consideration and to be 'responsive' to the schools and teachers, as far as possible.*

### 3.3.2 Workload and overload

In some countries, teachers and teacher unions argue that they are with too low numbers for all efforts and demands put upon them. The Netherlands is the clearest case in this respect (Muskens & Peters, 2009, pp. 43-44). Under that condition it would be impossible to add new tasks to the existing teacher tasks, e.g. with regard to keeping pupils at (high) risk aboard, without appropriate compensation and additional staff. The weight rules as applied in Dutch primary education since the 1980-ies were a kind of compensation for the extra-ordinary efforts and additional demands on schools and teachers for teaching high numbers of disadvantaged pupils.

In the following countries measures and resources for workload management in relation to pupils at (high) risk were observed: France, The Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and the UK. Measures and resources for additional teachers and support staff were mentioned in France, Hungary, Italy (with question mark), The Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain.

Several experts have argued that it needs the best teachers for the pupils at highest risk, who are most demanding in terms of time, effort, commitment and quality. Additional rewards can be a great help for this purpose, although most national salary schemes for teachers are not adapted to this purpose. The traditional schemes give highest salaries and career perspectives to teachers in the highest streams and tracks of (upper) secondary education. Salaries and career perspectives in pre-school education, in primary education and in vocational education and training with their concentration of pupils at (high) risk were usually not the best.

Some countries have set out measures and have made (some) resources available for additional rewards for the teachers of pupils at (high) risk: Hungary, The Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain (with question mark), UK. *Would the issue arise in other countries too, the author may recommend these to set out comparable measures and to make (some) resources available for the teachers of pupils at (high) risk.*

### 3.3.3 Outplacement

The option of outplacement is a possible obstacle for inclusive practices and measures in schools and by teachers. It is an obstacle of a different order than

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<sup>25</sup> A similar interactive process may follow, where views and arguments were to be shared with e.g. parents, neighbourhood committees, minority organisations, pupil organisations, etc. These groups are relying on their experience with the 'real' educational needs of their children and young people and their feed-in regards relevant everyday knowledge, with a good chance of missed points, alternative views, etc.

that of inappropriate force, top-down communication or the overload upon teachers that might follow from inclusive practices and measures. Outplacement can be seen as the *functional alternative* for inclusive practices and measures. When out-placed, pupils at (high) risk are separated from pupils with normal or good achievements and perspectives. Teachers may outplace them by dismissing them from class for disciplinary reasons. They may be dismissed from school, for a certain period or forever, in case of major disturbance and (petty) crime. They may be placed in special 'out-door' classes for 'slow' pupils, pupils with learning difficulties, language deficiencies, etc. They may be out-placed in temporary rebound arrangements. They may be placed in special schools in relation with a handicap, disability, special need, learning difficulty, etc. They may be out-placed in schools related to detention centres in case of crime.

In mainstream education, pupils at (high) risk may be 'down-placed' in the streams and tracks of secondary education with the lowest image, or 'back-placed' on the last bench as was the practice with Roma pupils in the past. It is against the interests of the pupils and dysfunctional, if the streams and tracks are under their potentials, capacities and ambition. It is certainly wrong if the outplacement would be implicitly discriminatory, representing the trashing of pupils at (high) risk, as was argued in the final report on the comparative conclusions.

The examples of Italy, Spain and Scotland have shown that outplacement is not really needed or only needed in very exceptional cases as a functional alternative. It meant that the authorities took additional inclusive measures and gave extra facilities, such as personal coaches for pupils with special needs or disabilities in the classroom. There, schools for special education became absent or very rare, with a percentage of pupils in special education under 1 or 2%. Their educational system is not clearly different from the other countries on the usual educational indicators, and no disproportional disturbed classroom climate was reported. It brought us to the general conclusion that 'inclusive education' is feasible.

Here, the question is raised what it means that outplacement is an option in most other countries. From the perspective of school and classroom management and from the perspective of the teacher, who is interested in best results for his or her pupils, it may be easier and more satisfying to outplace pupils at (high) risk. So, the more difficult pupils would not need extra attention and disturbance of classes and other pupils can be stopped. Teachers may doubt, whether they dispose of the capacities to be good teachers for pupils with special needs, learning difficulties, high talents, different cultures, etc. Schools and teacher may doubt the potentials, capacities and ambitions of the pupils concerned, for reasonable reasons: low or moderate performance, low or moderate progress, low or moderate cultural capital, downward streaming and tracking 'as usual', etc. Schools and teachers may feel forced to dismiss pupils and to outplace them in a rebound arrangement. These may pretend to be temporary, but the follow-up may also be: another schools, e.g. in special education for very hard pupils, in detention, on the street, in the lower strata of the labour market, etc. Schools and teachers may be forced to leave pupils to judiciary outplacement.

The existence of the outplacement options will continue and perhaps even reinforce outplacement practices and measures of schools and teachers. It is a political choice in how far schools and teachers are allowed to apply outplacement practices and measures. The choice is that of the national government and parliament as well as that of the national, regional, local and educational authorities. The choice for 'outplacement' may find support among parents ("what would be best for my children?"), the judiciary and the police in case of judiciary outplacement, medical and paramedical professionals (leading factor should be the 'disease' and its treatment), and the special schools and arrangements ("we are there in the interest of the special needs children").

*In line with the arguments in favour of inclusion in education the author recommends all relevant actors to reduce the options for schools and teachers for outplacement as a functional alternative.*

### **3.3.4 The own responsibility of parents and pupils**

There are different opinions in how far schools and teachers are responsible for the inclusion of the pupils at (high) risk: are they 'fully' responsible or are they responsible for their key tasks and functions? There is apparent and permanent debate on its boundaries, among all relevant actors: the representatives of the schools, the teachers, the policy makers, the parents, the pupils themselves. In some cases, judges, the policy makers and the authorities have concluded the conflict, i.e. in Italy and Scotland with regard to 'inclusive education' for all, and at the European level with regard to special Roma classes. On other issues, the debate goes on and will go on, for better or for worse.

The author may refer particularly to the boundaries between the responsibility of schools and teachers, on the one side, and that of parent and pupils themselves, on the other.

Generally spoken, most people agree that the socialisation of children and minors represents a parental responsibility. Unavoidably however, primary and secondary education are sharing this responsibility with them, at least during school time, and, more widely, at the ideological level. Implicitly or explicitly, the school courses and the teaching are transferring manners, norms and values to children, minors and young people. Among others for that reason, most schools and teachers are strongly in favour of close co-operation and communication with the parents of their (future) pupils. The older the pupils are, the more it regards their own responsibility, up to young adulthood of many pupils in upper vocational education and training, in tertiary education and in adult education. In case, the pupils are to be kept self-responsible for their lack of interest and achievement, their leaving school too early, their involvement in bullying, harassment and petty crime, etc., i.e. for their exclusion and exclusion processes.

Conflicts may arise what in case the responsibility is of each 'party' – it may even evolve up to judicial conflict. Schools and teachers may represent a restricted position that they are only responsible for the quality of the learning process with regard to the scheduled disciplines and courses during school time. Would parents or pupils be insufficiently responsive to the school and the teachers, schools and teachers would be unable to serve them. As far as needed they remain open

to co-operation and good communication with the parents and the pupils. To their regret, good communication with quite many parents of pupils at (high) risk is assumed difficult because of e.g. parental language deficiencies or the strange 'urban' language of many youngsters or their appalling lack of interest and motivation. And further, some parents and pupils may not be reasonable at all. In this frame, schools and teachers may not be able to accept their responsibility for keeping the pupils at (high) risk aboard or for their more general socialisation.

One may assume that the debate and related conflicts on 'shared responsibilities', 'your responsibility' and 'me not being responsible' is immanent and permanent.

*In case of conflict, the schools and the teachers deserve support for a fair view on their responsibility with regard to the inclusion of pupils at (high) risk, on behalf of the authorities, policymakers, experts, opinion leaders, etc., as long as they do not violate clear rules and arrangements and as long as they show continued commitment and efforts with regard to the inclusion of pupils at (high) risk.*

As far as debate and conflict are related to immigrant or minority or other 'different' groups in and around the schools, it may need continued and reinforced 'diversity management' for schools and 'diversity training' for teachers in the frame of the school's 'diversity plan'. These should extend the applicable tools for co-operation and good communication with immigrant or minority or 'different' parents and pupils, as far as possible.

*The author may recommend the Commission, the authorities, the schools and the teachers to develop their 'diversity plans', in case in consultation with local cultural organisations, other 'bridge builders' and specialised agencies.*

Examples and cases have been discussed in chapter 4 and 7 of the final report.

*In addition to a fair and even restricted position of schools and teachers, mediation is recommended with regard to general responsibility conflicts. It may also have learning effects on how to improve parental participation or pupils' involvement.*

### **3.3.5 Changing the teachers**

In all countries, measures with regard to teacher training and re-training were applied, with the aim to support teachers and schools on how to improve the inclusion of pupils at (high) risk. These measures are self-evident and necessary, as keeping pupils aboard is to be seen as a basic capacity requirement of a profession that needs academic or para-academic qualification, and that needs a more or less permanent upgrading of the professional qualifications.

Yet, debate in some countries learned that the necessary training and re-training for keeping pupils aboard is representing 'an issue'. It may reflect the above-mentioned top-down communications and changes that may provoke strong resistance to change among (some) concerned teachers and teachers' associations. Considerable doubt may arise or arose with regard to the needs and aims of the training and re-training as required.

*In case, the concerned teachers and teacher associations deserve respect for their objections. The author recommends the experts as well as policymakers, who insisted or are insisting on targeted training and re-training for inclusion purposes to take the objections seriously, to communicate with the teachers in an interactive and responsive way, and to try to find wide acceptance of proposed changes among schools and teachers.*

*The author recommends the school and the teachers to take care of the necessary qualifications with regard to their pupils at (high) risk, and to clarify their needs, e.g. in the frame of their educational planning and at the occasion of individual reviews or team reviews.*

### **3.3.6 Non-educational disciplines, priorities and preferences**

At the points above it was referred to non-educational authorities, organisations and professionals, being responsible for youth at (high) risk too, apart from schools and teachers or parents. Measures for helping and correcting youth at (high) risk is also a responsibility of e.g.:

- ✚ The police and the judiciary,
- ✚ Youth work in all its variants from street-corner work via scouting to sports and arts,
- ✚ Youth care,
- ✚ Physicians and other medical or paramedical professionals,
- ✚ Job centres,
- ✚ Etc.

The authorities in these fields that are setting out the priorities, targets, rules, procedures and arrangements for all these relevant disciplines. Their case managers are taking care of individual 'clients'. One or more case managers will bear the burden of the co-ordination of all relevant disciplines, organisations and professionals. The latter co-ordination can be most urgent taking into consideration the occurring low level of cooperation between the different disciplines, the incapacity to understand each other's professional language and competence, and the reluctance of sharing the burden of cooperation and co-ordination in terms of overhead, time and costs.

Schools and teachers are often the first to receive the signals of emerging (high) risks among young people in their school age. When faced with it, schools and teachers have three options.

The first and most ideal one is that the pupil will receive the full attention and help as needed from all relevant disciplines, while the school and the teachers are fully involved in the cooperation and co-ordination as needed. Because of their permanent and intense contact with most young people concerned, schools and teachers are apt to take the first lead in starting up the cooperation and co-ordination, e.g. via a school care team, remedial teachers, confidant teachers, designated teacher, etc.

*This ideal approach is to be reinforced and supported, as it promises to keep the lines to pupils at (emerging) risks open and short. The author recommends that the first signalling function and the start-up function of schools and teachers for help-*

*ing the pupils at (high) risk is recognised. Therefore, school and teachers should keep or get a leading position in the early warning networks as these exist at the local level and they may take and get the leading case management position in case of individual trajectories, including the trajectory that should keep them aboard in school. For the latter recommendation the clear exceptions regard judicial interference and institutional medical treatment.*

The other models are less ideal. Schools and teachers may try to avoid the cooperation and co-ordination as needed, either by taking all burden upon themselves, or by out-placing the burden and the pupils at (high) risk to other organisations and professionals. However understandable these mechanisms might seem to be, e.g. from the perspective of avoiding teacher overload, they are usually the wrong models and choices. For more complicated risks and troubles of the young people concerned, schools and teachers do not dispose of the capacities and competences as needed. So, they cannot help them out appropriately. By out-placing the burden and pupils concerned, schools and teachers will lose control of the further educational career and perspectives of these young people, who were and should remain their 'clients'.

*The author assumes that the recommendation on the recognised leading position of the schools and the teachers in the ideal model may avoid the choice for the wrong models, to a certain extent. The leading position would underline and reinforce the responsibility of the schools and the teachers.*

*Other appropriate measures that the author may recommend might be:*

-  *Clear local rules and arrangements on burden sharing,*
-  *Well-placed school care teams, remedial teachers, confidant teachers, designated teachers and further specialised teaching staff,*
-  *Reliance on (voluntary) tutors and mentors for pupils, who may be at risk,*
-  *Regular consultation by the co-ordinating authority,*
-  *Joint training session with other professionals and disciplines,*
-  *Etc.*

### **3.4 Final remark**

In relation to schools, teachers and their responsibility to keep their pupils at (high) risk aboard, a number of experts are assuming that 'new learning' would and should have the inclusive effects as needed. Therefore, they strongly insist on the introduction of 'new learning' in all streams, tracks and levels of primary and secondary education. The Commission's staff observed in the response to its consultation on improving the competences for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that pedagogic approaches as proposed "included new pedagogies, cross-curricular approaches to supplement single-subject teaching, and greater involvement of students in the design of their own learning. (...) Curricular reform to improve competences needs a holistic approach ..." (Commission of the European Communities, 2008, p. 5).

There is no disagreement in Europe on the need to focus education on the competences that (young) people need and will need in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. There is also no disagreement that all young people need it and will need it, as expressed and underlined in the introduction to the Commission's Communication on im-

proving competences for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Commission of the European Communities, 2008, pp. 3-4). Therefore, schools and teachers should foster the social inclusion of their pupils at (high) risk, keeping them aboard in education and preparing them for society appropriately and to their full potentials.

The author is, however, reluctant with regard to any pedagogic recommendation, such as those regarding 'new learning', for three reasons. These reasons are:

- ✚ The concept is rather vague and wide, including a great variety of teaching materials and styles, ordering of subjects and disciplines, foci on knowledge, co-operation, presentation and further competences as relevant for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, etc. Therefore, the author is unsure about what the concept is actually representing. Therefore, clear conclusions and recommendation are rather difficult.
- ✚ The evidence with regard to the educational and/or inclusion effects of measures that may refer to 'new learning' is insufficient for the recommendation that these measures were to be applied in other schools than those where the measures were applied and tested.
- ✚ The experts' rhetoric with regard to 'new learning' is tuned rather 'ex cathedra'. The author have argued above that 'ex cathedra' communications with schools and teachers is usually inappropriate.

*More appropriate are the less ambitious aims of reinforcing the commitment, efforts and focus of schools and teachers to keep their pupils at (high) risk aboard, as the author recommended in the opening section above.*

## 4 Reduction of early school leaving: discussion and recommendations

Further to the reduction of early school leaving the following points will be discussed:

- ✚ What data were to be used?
- ✚ Further research, improved knowledge base,
- ✚ There is no rational early school leaving,
- ✚ What measures for the pupils and groups at (high) risk?
- ✚ Focus on acceptable schools, pedagogy and conditions,
- ✚ Involvement of socio-economic sector in relation to the labour market.

### 4.1 What data were to be used?

As the indicator of early school leaving, the EU and EUROSTAT are referring to the numbers of young people, aged 20-24, who entered the labour market without sufficient qualification. Several national data bases and statistics referred to the registration of broken school careers, referring to all pupils, who disappeared from their schools or from their school registration during the current school year. However, such a full and reliable national registration system is a difficult task, both at the regional and the national level. It would be a full mission impossible at the European or the wider international level of e.g. the OECD and UNESCO.

A labour market survey such as that of EUROSTAT is making reliable measurements of the appropriate or inappropriate qualification among young working people, taking UNESCO's ISCED level 3C as its criterion. For reasons of comparative research and reliable measurement these surveys were to be followed up at the national and the regional level. National or regional educational registration systems are to be used as an additional support instrument for policymakers and educational authorities. These registrations may reveal both quantitative and qualitative critical points in e.g. secondary education, in vocational schools, their streams and tracks, and at the end-age of compulsory education, in the national or regional context.

*This leads to the recommendation that the EU and the Member States should rely primarily on (comparative) labour market surveys for the comparative assessment of regional, national and international (or European) early school leaving. This recommendation is in line with the national and European policy context for measures to reduce early school leaving, being the attainment of the required labour market qualification level for all or most young people.*

### 4.2 Further research: types, numbers, appropriate measures, weak countries

*Further (comparative) research on early school leaving is needed and recommended, as the issue is most urgent as a European policy objective and as the knowledge base on it is insufficiently developed.*

In the course of our study the following issues that need targeted European and/or national research attention, were indentified:

- ✚ *The skewed distribution of early school leaving between countries and regions.* Special European policy research attention is urgently needed to understand why the distribution of under-qualified young people is as skewed as it is. What differences and mechanisms with regard to young people, the educational system and/or the labour markets have lead to percentages above 20% in Portugal, Spain, Malta and Italy among young workers, to percentages under 7% in Slovenia, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and to percentages in between 10% and 20% in most other Member States? Understanding the differences and mechanisms will enable policy-makers to take appropriate action in the countries and regions with the highest scores, if needed with the support of the European Commission. *The author recommends the Commission to call upon a comparative research project that should explain the trends, differences and mechanisms.*
- ✚ *Break points in vocational education and training.* The next urgent research issue regards the analysis of break points in vocational schools, streams and tracks. These are to be determined, quantified and assessed, e.g. in relation to what schools do and can do, in relation to types of the young people, who dropped out, and in relation to the post-school careers of the dropouts. The majority of them might be so-called 'rational early school leavers' in their own eyes (to be discussed below). Why do they leave and what can be done against it?
- ✚ *Those, who will never attain "ISCED 3C".* This type of early school leavers might be 5-10% of each age cohort. Each country is challenged to clarify what to do for and with these groups, in education, on the labour market and in further adult life.
- ✚ *So-called rational early school leavers.* Presumably, the largest groups of early school leavers are to be identified as 'so-called rational early leavers', maybe up to 70% of all early school leavers. These are young people, who are not 'at risk', but leave their school at a too low level, although they would be able to attain the required qualification level. They may have lost their motivation in their 'boring school', as it was referred too in the French national report. Or they may have found a fine job, e.g. at their apprentice place, with good perspectives for their future. In that sense they may appear to be 'rational school leavers'. They may have been ill or they may have made a wrong choice for a stream or track and have to wait until the new school year before they can make a restart. Research into 'so-called rational early school leavers' should reveal these points. Career research should clarify both the emerging risks of unemployment as well as the qualification effects of later and adult education. Exit interviews and personal interviews at job centres or other centres for individual case work may be used to find latent risks and problems, as well as anchor points for renewed learning motivation and return to school, or for public campaigns against early school leaving.

### 4.3 No rational early school leaving

Apart from the research that is recommended on so-called rational early school leavers, the auhtor would like to discuss the following point and its subsequent recommendations.

However rational early school leaving might appear to be in the eyes of young people, from the perspective of 'society' there is no rational reason for early school leaving. 'Society' should therefore demand from all who can, to pass education at least at the ISCED 3C-level.

Such demand might be institutionalised in a light or in the most severe way. The light way would be that representatives of society, such as national authorities, social partners, educational authorities and schools, etc., support a more or less permanent awareness campaign concerning the necessity of being educated at ISCED 3C-level or higher. The most severe demand would be that the national and European authorities would enforce and sanction compulsory education up to the ISCED 3C-level, for all young people or for the unemployed among them. It would mean that compulsory education would be linked to the level of education as reached and not, as now is the case in most European countries, to age. The new policies and legislation as applied in The Netherlands, represents the severe way, to a certain extent. Compulsory education is prolonged until the age of 18, while under-qualified young people between 18 and 27 are obliged to return to education or to learning on the job in case they are jobless.

*The author recommends the Commission, the national, regional, local and educational authorities to consider the advantages of the most severe way, i.e. to enforce compulsory education up to the level of ISCED 3C for all young people, who can, at least for unemployed young people. Prolonged compulsory education is recommended as a further step in that direction.*

In vocational education and training an apparent cause of early school leaving is regarding the wrong choices of pupils. In the rich markets of schools, streams, tracks and sectors, many of them have to find out that their first or second choice was not satisfactory, that they had not the capacities and interests as required, that the pedagogic climate was not in line with their expectation, etc. So, they may quit. Reduction of early school leaving, temporary or definitively, may follow from improved information and counselling on vocational schools, their streams, tracks, and sectors, and the requirements to the pupils. Further improvement may follow from well-integrated tracks up to the ISCED 3C-level, without unneeded choice and change moments, e.g. between lower vocational education and one, two or more additional years in upper vocational education.

A temporary school break after a wrong choice is often unavoidable, in relation to the new school, stream or track – many starts and restarts are restricted to one or two occasions per year. Most important is to keep temporary school leavers ‘on track’, as to ensure their restart at the first occasion possible. It may involve the active intervention on behalf of school counsellors, schools, educational authorities, parents, and others as relevant to ensure the restart at the first occasion possible. In case, regional and national authorities were to co-ordinate such active intervention.

*In this respect, the author recommends the authorities, the schools and other actors as relevant, to make temporary school leavers restart their new schools, streams or tracks at the first occasion possible, and to keep unavoidable breaks as short as possible.*

Pupils have also left their schools because they had lost their motivation for learning and got disappointed with their ‘boring’ school. The author thinks that the combination of compulsory education, appropriate information and counselling, and an acceptable pedagogic climate should be sufficient to manage most motivation problems of pupils in secondary education.

*The major challenge here is the fostering of an acceptable pedagogic climate.*

#### **4.4 What measures for pupils and groups at (high) risk**

It is obvious that disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special needs and pupils involved in bullying and harassment (as victims or as perpetrators) run a comparatively high risk of leaving their schools too early. Comparatively many among them leave their schools before they have reached ISCED level 3C, and further, comparatively many among them are leaving their schools under their full potentials and capacities. In absolute numbers, the author assumes, however, that it regards a minority, i.e. a quarter to a third, of all early school leavers.

As far as they are part of the target groups of priority education, inclusive education and/or safe education, the measures undertaken in these domains should ensure their staying 'aboard' in education, certainly until they have reached the ISCED 3C level. Schools and authorities should ensure this target of their measures and they should control their effects at this point – is (at least) the ISCED 3C level attained, i.e. will the pupils at (high) risk not become early school leavers?

*The author recommends the schools and the authorities to ensure this target of their measures and they should control their effects at this point, i.e. that (at least) the ISCED 3C level is attained by pupils belonging to (high) risk target groups.*

It is however clear that not all pupils can reach ISCED level 3C, due to their personality and capacities. It may regard pupils with mental or other restrictions and needs. Many of them will receive support on behalf of inclusive education measures or will find a place in special education, while they may rely upon further support and arrangements in society during their youth and life. For others, mainstream schools and further mainstream institutions in society must respond to their low level or too low level of education. The schools, the institutions and the young people concerned will have to rely on mainstream resources, arrangements and/or additional measures as set out by national, regional or local actors, e.g. in the frame of lifelong learning. The latter is obviously intended by the Swedish SFI-project.

*For the young people concerned, jobs with low or moderate educational requirements are representing their best perspective. The author may recommend the authorities to monitor the availability and access to low education job on their labour markets, in the interest of young people, who cannot reach ISCED level 3C.*

#### **4.5 Focus on acceptable schools, pedagogy and conditions**

Most partners and further consulted experts have referred to the necessity of a good school, a challenging pedagogic climate and best teachers to keep the pupils of (lower) secondary education and vocational schools on track. Teachers, teaching teams and school leaders should enhance and foster the good school, create the challenging climate and be the best teachers, in good co-operation with the parents, in permanent dialogue with the pupils, and with others as appropriate. Teachers are to be supported by appropriate initial teacher training, in-service training as a new teacher, and targeted teacher re-training. In critical circumstances they were to be supported by appropriate working conditions and salaries – some even pleaded for the best conditions and the highest salaries in

critical circumstances. In case, schools, school leaders, school teams and teachers are relying upon expert advisers, who may share with them e.g. the positive experiences of other schools.

The evidence base for the most appropriate measures is, however, rather weak. Most ascertained points are the negative ones: overburdened teachers, who have lost their motivation, and schools that are weakly organised are hard contra-indicators for a climate with low numbers of early school leavers. As far as good practices are concerned: case studies described the good results that have been realised by this or that team under these or that circumstances, with as the common denominator that all or most active endeavours are more or less appropriate for being a good school, for creating a challenging climate and for working as motivated and good teachers. The common factor of most evaluations regarded the general commitment, efforts and focus of schools and staff to keep their potential early school leavers aboard.

*The author may recommend the Commission and relevant actors at the national, regional, and local level to support the schools in this respect, among others by the recommended European, national and regional knowledge centres that will disseminate materials on good schools, challenging climate and best teachers, and by incentives for those working under the most critical circumstances, and by facilities for teacher training and re-training.*

#### **4.6 Involvement of the socio-economic sector**

The author has underlined above that there is no rational early school leaving for 'society'. For the European Union and the Member States early school leaving is a highly dysfunctional phenomenon and trend in relation to the requirements of the modern, competitive labour markets, in Europe and worldwide. Therefore, 'society' is to be represented by its market relations and social partners, together with the educational sector and vocational education, on the one hand, and regional, national and European authorities, on the other. The social partners are to be involved and are to be consulted on labour market requirements and their 'translation' into vocational schools and training, streams and tracks that should lead to qualification at the ISCED 3C-level. The social partners as well as local and regional businesses and enterprises should be committed, among others by offering apprentice places to all pupils in vocational schools and training, including guarantees for guidance and jobs, if appropriate. Together with regional, national and European authorities, the business sectors should recognise their responsibility in this respect, also in the present hard times of economic crisis. The schools should be as co-operative and pro-active as possible, for the sake of their pupils and their future on the labour market.

*The author recommends the Commission and all relevant actors, particularly the social partners and the sector of vocational education, to re-consider the involvement of the social partners and the business sectors in measures to reduce early school leaving, both in the frame of the re-assessment of the Lisbon Strategy Document in 2010, and in joint strategies that are to be developed in face of the ongoing economic crisis.*

## 5 Pupils belonging to target groups at (high) risk

In varying degrees, the countries have set out measures and have allocated resources to schools and other agents to cater for pupils belonging to target groups at (high) risk. The comparative conclusions with regard to such target groups were summarised in the Final report: comparative conclusions, with focussed attention for the national target groups of disadvantages pupils, pupils with (recognised) handicaps, disabilities and/or special needs, and pupils, who were involved in bullying and harassment, as victims or as perpetrators, as co-victims or as supportive witnesses.

To a high degree, the schools are expected to cater for these pupils and their risks within the constraints of their own time, personnel, tools, accommodation and budget. They are further expected to do so for other pupils at risk, for whom no specific measures and resources are available. In varying degrees they feel or may feel pressed to take responsibilities they cannot or should not accomplish. Between the extremes of tight general resources and abundant specific measures and resources, schools and staff have to find their balanced practice with regard to their pupils at (high) risk. It evoked and will evoke both internal controversy, e.g. from the side of teachers feeling a too high work overload, or from that of parents fearing insufficient attention for their children. The controversy may be reflected up to national or regional Parliament or up to international bodies and NGOs that have proposed and will continue to propose the best practices and the measures that would be needed in that respect. As there is no hard empirical evidence with regard to best practices and therefore necessary measures beyond the school level, the external proposals are first of all to be seen as a well-meant advice to schools, staff, parents and pupils at (high) risk to improve their educational practices and achievements.

However, there is also logic and case-related evidence concerning good practices that have worked out positively at the school level. Therefore, schools, staff, parents and pupils at (high) risk should be able and willing to rely upon the regional, national and international body of knowledge representing such logic and evidence. Internal and external mediators should give them full and easy access to that body of knowledge, while research institutions and other knowledge makers such as specialised journalists and media should give continuous fresh and refreshed feed-in as relevant to that body of knowledge and its interested users, i.e. the schools, teachers, parents and pupils.

*For that reason, the author would like to repeat the earlier recommendation for linked European, national and regional knowledge centres with regard to inclusion and education and its valuable function as a node for the production and dissemination of relevant materials concerning the inclusion of pupils at (high) risk in education.*

For the comparative analysis the attention was focussed on three major risks of exclusion for education and the target groups concerned. These were:

- ✚ Social, economic, cultural and other disadvantages and inequities, and related priority education measures,
- ✚ Handicaps, disabilities and special needs, and related inclusive education measures,

- ✚ Involvement in bullying and harassment, and related safe education measures.

Inclusive education measures will be discussed first, followed by the priority education measures and safe education measures thereafter. The inclusive education measures are discussed first because our recommendations on this issue are more pertinent than those for priority education measures and safe education measures.

### 5.1 Inclusive education measures

Inclusive education for all or almost all pupils with special needs etc is an international UNESCO-aim. The comparative conclusion was drawn that inclusive education has proved to be feasible in at least certain countries and regions. Besides, international literature appeared to show that the educational achievements of most pupils concerned were as good as those of their classmates without special needs etc. And further, the country reports and the literature revealed that the, sometimes, apparent mechanisms of the stigmatisation, discrimination and ‘trashing’ of the pupils concerned was avoided.

*On behalf of this ‘evidence,’ the author recommends that schools and authorities ‘learn from the lessons’ of countries and regions concerned and from that of the international literature, reinforcing their efforts to foster inclusive education for all or almost all pupils with special needs, etc.*

*The European, national and regional knowledge centres should disseminate relevant inclusive strategies, modes of operation, practices and measures among authorities, schools, staff, parents and pupils, in response to local needs and experience.*

### 5.2 Priority education measures

Although in quite varying degrees and with obviously different national and regional target groups, the countries are endorsing the European policy objectives of Roma education, minority (language) education, priority education and intercultural education in relation to social, economic, cultural and other inequities and disadvantages. In most countries on North, West and Southern Europe, policies and measures to integrate young immigrant people and young people of immigrant descent in their schools and society prevailed, with further targets for e.g. the urban-county divide and/or non-immigrant disadvantaged groups, located in poor neighbourhoods. Gender was no apparent issue any more.

Following the landmark judgement of the European Court (see section 1.1 above) the EU may have to set a European guideline against special Roma schools and/or other special school that apparently would discriminate certain economic, social or cultural minorities. *In case, countries, regions, schools and staff may have to adapt their rules, practices and measures with regard to the placement of Roma children and/or children belonging to other minorities in special schools.*

The national reports and further documentation has delivered a large set of most interesting case studies, i.e. local actions, practices and measures that were feasible, that had positive effects and that were valuable contributions to the re-

gional, national and European bodies of relevant knowledge on priority education measures. The reports also included less positive or even negative cases, referring to implementation problems, problems emerging in the course of time, and to lack of intended effect or quite discouraging side-effects, such as the so-called dependence effect of the enduring priority approach on certain target groups. For some the latter is reason to reject priority policies and its measures in principle, for others to link priority education measures to a clear timeframe and end-date at which the priority measures should have achieved the intended effects. Continuation should depend on the avoidance of the so-called dependence effect and necessity to undertake further priority education measures for the pupils concerned. Preferably, the aims of the priority measures should be realised within the usual constraints of time, staff, tools accommodation and budget.

*The author is laying high value on a clear timeframe for priority education measures, but he is also aware that most national and regional policymakers as well as committed schools and teachers are likely to keep to more or less continuous priority education measures. Therefore he recommends them to keep to the more or less continuous priority education measures, but to be aware of the advantage or even necessity of a clear timeframe.*

The variety of practices and measures, combined with the diversity of target groups did not allow for precise comparative conclusions. Neither did the (qualitative) case study design of most cases, as was explained in attachment 2 to the Final report: comparative conclusions. Attempts, however, at national or regional assessment were available. *The common factor in most cases regarded the commitment, effort and focus of the schools and teachers as well as further relevant actors that were involved in the priority education practices and measures. Therefore all recommendation done in chapter 3 should to extended and applied to priority education measures.*

It is not possible to draw general and comparative conclusions on specific target groups or specific priority practices and measures. Therefore, the schools, the teachers and further relevant actors must settle their own good practices and find the best measures that apply to them. Important help regards 'lessons learned' from the practice and measures of others. *For that, they should find help from the side of regional, national and European knowledge centres that are easily accessible and that respond appropriately to their needs and circumstances.*

### **5.3 Safe education measures**

There is an obvious need for effective safety protection measures in and around schools, as well as practices and measures that should reduce bullying and harassment, in which pupils were involved and will be involved in the future. Although it may regard 'incidents' at face value, the phenomena are a rather permanent threat to pupils and the school community. It may need long-term measures and strategies to assure a reasonable level of safety in and around the schools and an acceptable low level of 'light bullying' without harassment.

The reports showed that something can be done and therefore should be in that direction, without clear outcomes on what measures would be most effective and

what would fail. Much appeared to depend on the problem awareness among school leaders and staff as well as to their commitment to reduce bullying and to stop harassment, and the serious analysis of local incidents and circumstances. *As above, the common factor in most cases regarded the commitment, efforts and focus of the schools and teachers as well as further relevant actors that were involved in the safe education practices and measures. Therefore all recommendation done in chapter 3 should be extended and applied to safe education measures.*

‘Safe education’ can be realised by preventive and with repressive measures, with awareness campaigns or without these, with and without the help of external specialised agencies or internal safety manager(s), etc. Therefore, as much as above for the priority education measures, the schools, the teachers and further relevant actors must settle their own good practices and find the best measures that apply to them. Important help is regarding ‘lessons learned’ from the practice and measures of others. *For that, they should find help from the side of regional, national and European knowledge centres that are easily accessible and that respond appropriately to their needs and circumstances.*

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