
European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE)

Methodology Report



EUROPEAN AGENCY
for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

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European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education



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Editors: Amanda Watkins, Serge Ebersold and András Lénárt, Agency Staff

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Secretariat
Østre Stationsvej 33
DK-5000 Odense C Denmark
Tel: +45 64 41 00 20
secretariat@european-agency.org

Brussels Office
Rue Montoyer, 21
BE-1000 Brussels Belgium
Tel: +32 2 213 62 80
brussels.office@european-agency.org

www.european-agency.org



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full version
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Agency:	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
EASIE:	European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education
ET 2020:	Education and Training 2020
EU:	European Union
ISCED:	International Standard Classification of Education
MIPIE:	Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-INES:	OECD Indicators of Education Systems
PISA:	Programme for International Student Assessment
SEN:	Special educational needs
UNCRPD:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



INTRODUCTION

This short report presents an overview of the methodology developed within the European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE) data collection activities. It aims to present the relevant information about *what* has been done, *how* and *why* within the EASIE activities.

This report has been prepared to accompany the quantitative and qualitative country information available on the Data area of the Agency's website (www.european-agency.org/data). The web area presents all available quantitative and qualitative country information in an accessible, interactive and easily comparable way.

So as to put the EASIE work into a clear context, this methodology report presents the following information:

- The conceptual basis for Agency data collection work
- A timeline of data collection activities since 1999
- The basis and working procedures for the current EASIE work
- A description of the methods used for quantitative data collection (country data)
- A description of the methods used for qualitative data collection (background information)
- A description of the framework for data analysis and interpretation.

The methodology described has been applied to the data collection exercises conducted in 2014 (covering the 2012/2013 school year) and 2016 (covering the 2014/2015 school year).

No actual data is presented in this report. All quantitative and qualitative data is freely available from: www.european-agency.org/data

Please direct any questions regarding the EASIE work and information to the Agency via: secretariat@european-agency.org



CONCEPTUAL STARTING POINTS FOR AGENCY DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

The field of inclusive and special needs education does not deal with ‘absolutes’ – policy-makers, practitioners, researchers and the wider community do not always agree on who does and does not have a disability, impairment or special educational need. The reason for this is that a person’s special need essentially arises from two possible sources – factors within the person themselves (some form of impairment) and factors within their environment (which can either minimise or exacerbate the impairment).

Special educational needs (SEN) is a ‘construction’ that countries usually define within their legislation. This definition is then used to identify, assess and make provision for learners in different ways. There are no universally accepted definitions of disability and/or SEN available to use to compare European countries. Some countries are considering incorporating ISCED definitions into their legislation. However, there are no other specific, externally generated definitions relating to SEN or special needs education in use within countries’ educational legislation or data collection work.

Agency member countries recognise that using ‘external’ definitions of disability or SEN in data collection work has significant methodological difficulties in practice. The policies and practice that direct inclusive and special needs education provision in countries have evolved over time, within very specific contexts. They are therefore highly individual. For most countries, policies have a clear focus on special or additional ‘provision’, rather than solely ‘in-learner’ factors. All countries are moving away from definitions, assessment and provision based on a medical model, towards educational and ‘interactionist’ approaches. Nevertheless, there are no agreed criteria regarding the type of provision certain learners should receive. For this reason, Agency countries have agreed on the most useful means of collecting any form of quantitative data on inclusive or special needs education. This is through a ‘bottom-up’ approach which uses the country’s own legal definition of SEN as the basis for data collection.

Using country definitions of SEN as the basis for data collection presents a number of methodological difficulties. These need to be made clear if the data is to be interpreted correctly:

- Country legislation and policy may or may not include a ‘definition’ of what is meant by inclusive education and a segregated setting.
- Countries include different ‘categories’ of pupils within their definitions of SEN. Different ‘categories’ of special needs may or may not be covered: disability (sensory, physical, psychological); learning difficulties; behaviour problems; health problems; socially disadvantaged, etc.



- Countries may or may not ‘count’ only those pupils who have an official ‘recognition’ – decision, certificate, statement or other legal document – of SEN.
- The age range of compulsory school education is not the same in all countries. Alongside this, some countries count pupils outside the compulsory age range if they are enrolled in compulsory sector education.
- Many countries do not collect data on the numbers of pupils in fully inclusive settings who receive SEN support. A number of countries indicate that official figures are for ‘known’ pupils, but that other pupils also receive support.

The points above illustrate that *it is not useful to compare raw numbers of pupils officially recognised as having SEN* or to compare raw numbers of pupils with SEN in different placements.

Identification rates – the percentage of pupils recognised as having SEN, against the whole school population – can be calculated using raw numbers. However, they are only directly comparable between countries if an operational definition of SEN is applied.

Placement rates – the percentage of pupils recognised as having SEN, educated in different settings, against the whole school population – can also be calculated. These are only comparable if some operational definitions of different settings are applied.

Quantitative data on identification and placement rates is of interest. Nonetheless, *it cannot provide any indication of the quality, suitability or appropriateness of the education provided for pupils with SEN*. Other, qualitative data must be considered in relation to quantitative data if trends in provision and movement towards inclusion are to be fully understood.

This thinking has underpinned all Agency data collection activities since 1999. During that time, different steps and developments have been taken to address the difficulties highlighted above and the methodological issues evident in collecting quantitative data within the field of inclusive and special needs education. The subsequent sections focus on these concrete steps and developments.



TIMELINE OF AGENCY DATA COLLECTION WORK

The current EASIE data collection work has built upon a series of Agency activities conducted since 1999. This section outlines the activities so as to put the EASIE work into a timeline context.

Data collection on pupils with special educational needs

The Agency first collected comparative quantitative data on the numbers of pupils identified as having SEN in 17 Agency member countries in 1999. This work was an activity under the evaluation of the European Commission's Socrates programme (cordis.europa.eu/news/rcn/11898_en.html).

The information collected in 1999 was reviewed and considered useful reference material for Agency country representatives. A decision was taken to regularly collect quantitative data on the numbers of pupils identified as having SEN and where they were educated. Data has since been collected by Agency member country representatives and published by the Agency every two years since 2002.

In 2002 and 2004, the quantitative information collected focused upon:

1. the number of *compulsory school-aged pupils* (including those with SEN);
2. the number of *compulsory school-aged pupils with SEN* (in all educational settings);
3. the number of *pupils with SEN in separate special schools*.

In addition, accompanying background (qualitative) information from countries was collected. This consisted of a description of the compulsory age phase, clarification of public/private sector education, and the legal definition of SEN in the country concerned.

Using this information, two comparative indicators could be calculated:

- The percentage of pupils identified as having SEN (based on the whole school population)
- The percentage of pupils educated in separate special schools (based on the whole school population).

This information was published by the Agency. It was also used within the Eurydice *Key Data on Education in Europe 2005* publication in the section relating to 'Participation – trends in pupils educated separately' (www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw_file/eurydice///Key_Data_2005_EN.pdf).

In 2006, a further quantitative data collection element was added:

4. The number of *pupils with SEN in inclusive settings* (mainstream schools).



The information provided by this additional data element was then reviewed. It was considered too unclear to give additional comparative information. Therefore, a decision was taken to refine the data collected relating to the placements of pupils with SEN:

4. The number of *pupils with SEN in special classes in mainstream schools*
5. The number of *pupils with SEN in fully inclusive settings*.

These refined quantitative data questions used a placement benchmark relating to time spent in an education setting. A separate (segregated) setting is where a pupil with SEN follows education in a separate special class or special school for the largest part – 80% or more – of their time.

Agency member country representatives agreed upon this operational definition of a segregated placement. It has been used across different areas of Agency thematic project work.

These five quantitative data questions were used for the data collection exercises in 2008, 2010 and 2012. The same qualitative data was collected for each dataset.

Agency data collected during this period was used in the Commission Staff Working Documents entitled *Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training: Indicators and Benchmarks 2008* (www.ecnais.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/EandT_in_Europe_2008-report_indicators_and_benchmarks.pdf) and *2009* (ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/2/2009/EN/2-2009-1616-EN-F-0.Pdf).

The 2008, 2010 and 2012 datasets are available from the Publications section of the Agency's website (www.european-agency.org/publications/ereports).

MIPIE

In late 2010, a parallel scoping activity was initiated, entitled Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education (MIPIE – www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/mapping-the-implementation-of-policy-for-inclusive-education). This activity was a project co-financed by a European Community Grant under the Lifelong Learning, Comenius Accompanying Measures programme.

The MIPIE work did not focus on collecting qualitative or quantitative data. Rather, its goal was to identify *what* data is required to inform policy for inclusive education and *how* it can be collected. Crucially, the project involved both policy-makers for inclusive education – Agency member country representatives – and data collection experts – statisticians working in ministries of education and responsible for national-level data collection.



Working collectively, the representatives from 27 countries:

- developed a rationale for what information needs to be made available for policy-makers;
- identified what information is already available;
- highlighted the gaps in current information;
- provided detailed proposals on how the necessary information could be collected in the future for the purposes of national self-mapping and for European-level comparative purposes.

The MIPIE project report contains the final proposals (www.european-agency.org/publications/ereports/mipie-report/mipie-report).

The project concluded that data collection must be in line with EU objectives for education and training (ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework_en). It must also be in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006; www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml), as this has an increasing influence upon legal frameworks for education. Mapping the implementation of policy for inclusive education therefore requires indicators that provide evidence that education systems are equitable for pupils with SEN. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators need to be identified in relation to:

- Participation in education and training
- Access to support and accommodation
- Learning success and transition opportunities
- Affiliation opportunities.

The project findings provided a long-term agenda for developing Agency data collection and related project work. However, not all of the MIPIE project findings could be implemented immediately. Therefore, in 2012, Agency country representatives agreed to undertake further development work to agree the focus and procedures for collecting quantitative and qualitative data collection regarding *participation in inclusive education* in the compulsory school sector.

This long-term work is the current European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE), presented in detail in the next section. The EASIE activities will be long-term, incremental Agency activities. The intention is that the work will:

- be the starting point for developing longer-term data collection on rights, quality and effectiveness issues;
- lead to an agreed set of indicators on inclusive education for Agency member countries, as well as a wider audience.



THE BASIS FOR THE EASIE WORK

As a result of the various developments in Agency data collection work with member countries, the *agreed goal for the EASIE work is to provide individual country, comparative and aggregated data that informs country-level work on learners' rights issues and informs debates on equity and participation in inclusive education.*

The EASIE work represents a shift in the emphasis of Agency data collection. It moves away from a focus on pupils with SEN and placement in separate segregated settings, towards a focus on all pupils in compulsory education and participation in inclusive settings.

Since 2012, the Agency has conducted discussions with the nominated data collection experts from member countries, as well as pilot work in a limited number of countries. This was in order to reach agreement on what data is needed to achieve this change in focus and how it should be collected.

Workshops with country experts from all Agency member countries were conducted in:


- 2012, focusing on country data collection possibilities;
- 2013, exploring feasibility and comparability issues;
- 2014, to agree the focus and procedures for data collection.

Existing data availability in countries was examined in depth through piloting activities. In 2013, pilots were implemented in ten countries and in 2015, pilots were implemented in four countries.

Guidelines for EASIE data collection work

Through this work, a number of guidelines for EASIE have been agreed and underpin all work:

1. *Taking a bottom-up approach* – the EASIE work is based on Agency member countries' current policy and practice for inclusive education, as well as data collection work. No externally generated definitions are used within EASIE. All areas of data collection, as well as procedures, are based on working agreements that have been discussed with the EASIE experts.
2. *A focus on educational opportunities* – the information collected within EASIE does not rely on the identification of 'in-pupil' factors (i.e. types of disability or SEN). The focus is on key aspects of the educational system – enrolment in education and placement in different types of provision.



3. *The use of existing data sources* – the EASIE data collection uses quantitative and qualitative information that is already collected and available in countries. No additional data collection is involved.

4. *Building on existing international tools and definitions* – to support comparability, existing data collection concepts, parameters, definitions and sources have been used wherever possible. These include ISCED 2011 definitions for a number of key concepts and the use of Eurostat population data as a source.

(The ISCED definitions used in the EASIE work are contained in the Annex at the end of this report).

5. *Sharing information with other organisations* – the Agency regularly shares information about the development, implementation and outcomes of the EASIE activities with representatives of the European Commission, Eurostat, OECD-INES and UNESCO. This information exchange is an important way of ensuring synergy of the respective organisations' work in this area, as well as avoiding duplication of country work as far as possible.

The focus of EASIE data collection

Overall, the EASIE data collection work has focused on developing procedures and outputs that provide comparable information from countries to inform questions relating to:

1. *Access to education*
2. *Access to inclusive education.*

The agreed focus for EASIE data collection therefore covers:

- The *potential compulsory school age range population* in ISCED levels 1 and 2 in a country (the number of children in a given age range)
- The *actual compulsory school age range population* in ISCED levels 1 and 2 (the number of pupils enrolled in schools in a given age range)
- *All sectors of compulsory education* (state, independent and private)
- *All possible educational placements* (mainstream, special classes and units and special schools)
- *Non-formal education* (provision maintained by non-education sectors, i.e. health or social services)
- *Out of school pupils* (those not in any kind of formal provision).



In order for country data covering these areas to be comparable, two important operational definitions for data collection were identified and agreed upon:

1. *An operational definition of an official decision of SEN* – an official decision leads to a pupil being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs. An official decision meets the following criteria:
 - There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team.
 - The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the pupil's school.
 - There is a legal document which describes the support the pupil is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning.
 - The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process.

All data collected relating to pupils with SEN is in line with this operational definition of an official decision of SEN.

2. *An operational definition of an inclusive setting* – an inclusive setting refers to education where the pupil with SEN follows education in mainstream classes alongside their mainstream peers for the largest part – 80% or more – of the school week.

This benchmark has been used in different forms in previous Agency projects and data collection work. 80% clearly indicates pupil placement for the majority of their school week in a mainstream setting. At the same time, it acknowledges possibilities for small group or one-to-one withdrawal for limited periods of time (i.e. 20% or one day a week).

Not all countries are able to provide exact data relating to the 80% time placement benchmark. Therefore, proxies have been identified, agreed upon and applied as needed.

It is recognised that the application of the agreed operational definitions in countries can be built upon and improved. Future EASIE work will focus on this.



EASIE QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The EASIE quantitative data collection involves country experts providing statistical information in an Excel file. This file has a number of agreed inbuilt checks and calculations to aid data accuracy.

The statistical data is complemented by information on sources, as well as detailed notes – regarding, for example, methodology issues – as required to explain the data presented.

All the available information is presented in a dedicated section on each country page of the Agency Data web area (www.european-agency.org/data/country-data-and-background-information).

There are six data collection tables for each country – some compulsory and some optional:

1. Population and enrolment (compulsory)
2. Age samples of 9 and 15 years (optional)
3. Pupils with an official decision of SEN (compulsory)
4. Gender breakdown of pupils with an official decision of SEN (optional)
5. Age breakdown for ISCED level 1 of pupils with an official decision of SEN (optional)
6. Age breakdown for ISCED level 2 of pupils with an official decision of SEN (optional).

The data collected is actual numbers of pupils, not fulltime equivalents, or rounded-up figures. Estimations are acceptable where absolutely necessary. However, if any form of estimation is used, it is explained and included in the notes section.

Where necessary, the following agreed codes were used to indicate:

- Missing data – M
- The question is not applicable within the country context – NA.

Notes always accompany M and NA entries.

The content, purpose, essential focus and comparability factors of each of the tables are described below.

Table 1: Population and enrolment

The *purpose* of this table is to provide data for the headline indicator on inclusive education – the percentage of all children within ISCED levels 1 and 2 age ranges being educated in inclusive settings.



The headline indicator focuses on inclusive education in the broadest sense. It is based on data on all children eligible to be in formal education, not just those recognised as having SEN.

Data from this table can be used as a basis for wider data analysis linked to all other tables.

The *focus* of the table is upon the entire potential population at ISCED levels 1 and 2.

The data collected explores:

- who is in formal education and who is not;
- who is educated in an inclusive setting and who is not.

The data collected provides information on:

- access to formal education;
- the placement of pupils in inclusive settings or otherwise.

There are five questions in the table, each requiring data relating to numbers at ISCED levels 1 and 2.

1. How many school-aged children are there in both ISCED levels?
2. How many pupils are enrolled in all formal educational settings in both ISCED levels?
3. How many pupils are out of any formal educational settings in both ISCED levels?
4. How many pupils are enrolled in mainstream formal educational settings with their non-disabled peers in both ISCED levels?
5. How many pupils are enrolled and educated in mainstream classes with their non-disabled peers for at least 80% of the time in both ISCED levels?

The *comparability factors* accounted for within the table are:

- The ISCED definitions of levels 1 and 2
- The ISCED definition of formal education
- The entire potential school population data taken from the Eurostat annual population statistics (Question 1).

The potential use of different data sources – population and enrolment data – for this table was recognised as a possible methodological issue. Therefore it was agreed with data collection experts that discrepancies between data for Questions 1



and 2 should be explained as far as possible. Any data discrepancies over 1% required more extensive explanations.

Table 2: Age samples of 9 and 15 years

The *purpose* of this table is to provide age sample data in line with the headline indicator on inclusive education – the percentage of children aged 9 and 15 years being educated in inclusive settings.

The age sample data focuses upon inclusive education in the broadest sense. It is based on data for all children of 9 and 15 years eligible to be in formal education.

This table was proposed to examine the potential comparability of data for some countries which could be affected by the practice of pupils repeating school years. This could result in ISCED levels that are not directly comparable with age ranges.

The sample age of 15 years gives possibilities for cross-referencing with OECD PISA analyses, as well as data relating to the ET 2020 targets on school drop-outs, etc.

The *focus* of the table is upon the potential populations of pupils of a specific age:

- 9 years
- 15 years (this age corresponds with EU-level data collection on school drop-out rates).

The data provided within this table focuses upon age-based samples. Within these samples, it explores:

- who is in formal education and who is not;
- who is educated in an inclusive setting and who is not.

Data collected in line with this table provides comparative sample information on:

- access to formal education;
- the placement of pupils in inclusive settings or otherwise.

The data collection questions for the table are based on the 'Population and enrolment' table. However, these are re-phrased to link to specific age samples:

1. How many children are aged 9/15 years?
2. How many pupils are enrolled in all formal educational settings aged 9/15 years?
3. How many pupils are out of any formal educational settings aged 9/15 years?
4. How many pupils are enrolled in mainstream formal educational settings with their non-disabled peers aged 9/15 years?



5. How many pupils are enrolled and educated in mainstream classes with their non-disabled peers for at least 80% of the time aged 9/15 years?

The *comparability factors* accounted for within the table are:

- The age samples of 9 and 15 years
- Data by specific age will be comparable across all countries
- The ISCED definition of formal education
- Entire population data taken from the Eurostat annual population statistics (Question 1).

Table 3: Pupils with an official decision of SEN

The *purpose* of this table is to provide data relating to pupils with an official decision of SEN that is in line with the agreed operational definition of an official decision, used within the EASIE data collection work.

The data provided via the table examines where pupils with an official decision are placed for their education.

All data provided must be considered in line with the Country Background Information relating to the official decision of SEN procedures in the country concerned.

The *focus* is upon those pupils who are officially recognised as having significant educational needs and who require resources to be allocated to them.

The data provides information about the placement of pupils with recognised SEN in inclusive settings or otherwise.

There are five questions in the table, each requiring data relating to numbers of pupils with an official decision at ISCED levels 1 and 2:

1. How many pupils have an official decision of SEN in ISCED levels 1 and 2?
2. How many pupils with an official decision of SEN are educated in formal mainstream educational settings with their non-disabled peers of the same age for at least 80% of the time in ISCED levels 1 and 2?
3. How many pupils with an official decision of SEN are educated in separate special classes in mainstream schools in ISCED levels 1 and 2?
4. How many pupils with an official decision of SEN are educated in separate special schools in ISCED levels 1 and 2?
5. How many pupils with an official decision of SEN are educated in non-formal educational provision maintained by the education, health, social or justice sectors in ISCED levels 1 and 2?



The *comparability factors* accounted for within the table are:

- The operational definition of an official decision of SEN
- The ISCED definitions of levels 1 and 2
- The ISCED definition of formal education.

Table 4: Gender breakdown of pupils with an official decision of SEN

The *purpose* of this table is to provide a gender breakdown of the data relating to pupils with an official decision of SEN.

The *focus* of the table is an examination of gender equity issues in relation to pupils with an official decision of SEN.

The data will provide information on:

- how many boys and girls are educated in an inclusive setting;
- the placement of boys and girls with recognised SEN in inclusive settings or otherwise.

There are five questions in the table that require data relating to numbers of boys and girls with an official decision at ISCED levels 1 and 2:

1. How many male and female pupils have an official decision of SEN in ISCED levels 1 and 2?
2. How many male and female pupils with an official decision of SEN are educated in formal mainstream educational settings with their non-disabled peers of the same age for at least 80% of the time in ISCED levels 1 and 2?
3. How many male and female pupils with an official decision of SEN are educated in separate special classes in mainstream schools in ISCED levels 1 and 2?
4. How many male and female pupils with an official decision of SEN are educated in separate special schools in ISCED levels 1 and 2?
5. How many male and female pupils with an official decision of SEN are educated in non-formal educational provision maintained by the education, health, social or justice sectors in ISCED levels 1 and 2?

The *comparability factors* accounted for within the table include:

- The operational definition of an official decision of SEN
- The ISCED definitions of levels 1 and 2
- The ISCED definition of formal education.



Tables 5 and 6: Age breakdowns of pupils at ISCED levels 1 and 2 with an official decision of SEN

The *purpose* of these two tables is to provide age breakdowns of the data relating to pupils with an official decision of SEN. The data gives information about the ages of pupils with an official decision of SEN being educated within ISCED level 1 and 2 programmes.

The *focus* of the table is upon examining specific equity issues in relation to access to age-appropriate programmes for pupils with an official decision of SEN.

The five questions in the table each require data relating to the age and number of pupils with an official decision of SEN at ISCED levels 1 and 2:

1. How many pupils of each age have an official decision of SEN in the respective ISCED level?
2. How many pupils of each age with an official decision of SEN are educated in formal mainstream educational settings with their non-disabled peers of the same age for at least 80% of the time in the respective ISCED level?
3. How many pupils of each age with an official decision of SEN are educated in separate special classes in mainstream schools in the respective ISCED level?
4. How many pupils of each age with an official decision of SEN are educated in separate special schools in the respective ISCED level?
5. How many pupils of each age with an official decision of SEN are educated in non-formal educational provision maintained by the education, health, social or justice sectors in the respective ISCED level?

In addition, for Tables 5 and 6, countries indicate the typical ages covered in the ISCED level.

The *comparability factors* accounted for within the table include:

- The operational definition of an official decision of SEN
- The ISCED definitions of levels 1 and 2
- The ISCED definition of formal education.



FRAMEWORK FOR DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Work with the EASIE country experts has also led to the identification of possibilities for data calculations. The calculations have the potential to provide:

- an analysis of individual country information;
- comparative information across all countries;
- aggregated, total averages across countries.

In relation to *population and enrolment data*, the following data analysis possibilities have been agreed:

- Enrolment rate in mainstream education based on the enrolled school population
- Enrolment rate in inclusive education based on the enrolled school population.

In relation to data on the *age samples of pupils aged 9 and 15 years*, the following data analysis possibilities have been agreed:

- Age sample enrolment rate in mainstream education based on the enrolled school population
- Age sample enrolment rate in inclusive education based on the enrolled school population.

In relation to data on *pupils with an official decision of SEN*, the following data analysis possibilities have been agreed:

- Percentage of pupils with an official decision of SEN based on the enrolled school population
- A breakdown of placements of pupils with an official decision of SEN by:
 - placement in inclusive education;
 - placement in special classes;
 - placement in special schools;
 - placement in non-formal educational settings
- Percentage of pupils with an official decision of SEN in inclusive settings based on the enrolled school population
- Percentage of pupils with an official decision of SEN in special classes based on the enrolled school population
- Percentage of pupils with an official decision of SEN in special schools based on the enrolled school population



- Percentage of pupils with an official decision of SEN in non-formal educational settings based on the enrolled school population.

For data on *gender breakdown of pupils with an official decision of SEN* and *age breakdowns for ISCED levels 1 and 2 of pupils with an official decision of SEN*, the data analysis calculations will be the same as listed above. However, the results will be further broken down by gender and age within ISCED levels.

Data analysis reports will be available from the Agency Data web area:

www.european-agency.org/data

The intentions behind the data analysis reports are to provide:

- an agreed set of indicators for countries to inform their work in relation to the UNCRPD (2006) and EU objectives for education and training;
- country and comparative data from an inclusive perspective to inform learner rights issues;
- country and comparative data to inform debates on equity and participation in education.

In the longer term, it is anticipated that the EASIE data collection and analysis work will be the starting point for developing more extensive quantitative and qualitative data collection on rights, quality and effectiveness issues.



EASIE QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

In order to put the quantitative data supplied by countries into a clear context, all countries provide four areas of descriptive, qualitative information – Background Information. This is presented in a dedicated section on each country page of the Agency Data web area (www.european-agency.org/data/country-data-and-background-information).

The qualitative background information takes the form of short written texts in relation to each of the agreed four areas, listed below. The specific questions that countries answered in providing their qualitative information are indicated in italics.

1. A description of how the official decision of SEN used in the country relates to the agreed EASIE operational definition

An official decision leads to a pupil being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs.

- *What are the legal entitlements a pupil has under what legislation?*
- *What is understood by additional support within the country context?*

An official decision meets the following criteria:

- There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team.
 - *What educational assessment procedure has been followed?*
- The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the pupil's school.
 - *How are multi-disciplinary teams comprised?*
- There is a legal document which describes the support the pupil is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning.
 - *What type of legal document describes the support the pupil is eligible to receive?*
 - *How is the document used as the basis for planning?*
- The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process.
 - *What processes of formal, regular review are involved?*

2. The proxy indicator for the 80% benchmark used for data collection

For a minority of countries, actual data is available to verify the 80% placement in inclusive settings benchmark. Other countries use proxy indicators for the benchmark in the data collection.



These proxy indicators can be:

- Actual data available to verify the 80% benchmark
- Placement in a mainstream class implies over 80% or more with non-disabled peers
- Data is available on the number of support hours allocated to a pupil
- Placement in a mainstream class implies over 50% or more with non-disabled peers.

Countries indicate which proxy indicator they are using, as well as details on the following:

- *Why this proxy is used*
- *Difficulties in using the proxy*
- *Country-specific issues in applying the proxy (for example if the country has a dual placement system, this requires explanation).*

3. A detailed description of what is meant by out of formal education within the country

Using the 2011 ISCED definition of 'formal education', EASIE experts were asked to indicate:

- Which pupils are considered to be out of education – i.e. meaning those not in formal education as defined by ISCED. How is the population of out of education pupils defined, for example are they understood as being in 'other' forms of education, or are they out of any form of provision?
- Any country definitions of formal and non-formal/informal education. How are specific cases – such as home-educated pupils – considered?
- Where data from non-educational sectors – i.e. social, justice, health – has been provided, the exact sources.

4. How data on private sector education has been covered in the country information

The EASIE data collection covers all sectors of education, including the pupil population in the private sector. EASIE experts were asked to describe:

- what is understood by the private sector in their country;
- who has been counted for each relevant question;
- any specific issues relating to providing data on private education and how these have been overcome in the data collection.



ANNEX: ISCED (2011) DEFINITIONS USED WITHIN EASIE

In order to support data comparability across countries, all country data has, as far as possible, been provided in line with the ISCED definitions below.

All definitions are taken from: UNESCO, 2011. *Revision of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)*. General Conference 36th Session, Paris 2011, 36 C/19, 5 September 2011. Paris: UNESCO.

www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/UNESCO_GC_36C-19_ISCED_EN.pdf

*An **educational programme** is defined as a coherent set or sequence of educational activities or communication designed and organized to achieve predetermined learning objectives or accomplish a specific set of educational tasks over a sustained period. Objectives encompass improving knowledge, skills and competencies within any personal, civic, social and/or employment related context. Learning objectives are typically linked to the purpose of preparing for more advanced studies and/or for an occupation or trade or class of occupations or trades but may be related to personal development or leisure (p. 4).*

***Special needs education.** Education designed to facilitate the learning of individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives in an educational programme. Reasons may include (but are not limited to) disadvantages in physical, behavioural, intellectual, emotional and social capacities. Educational programmes in special needs education may follow a similar curriculum as that offered in the parallel regular education system, however they take individuals' particular needs into account by providing specific resources (e.g. specially trained personnel, equipment, or space) and, if appropriate, modified educational content or learning objectives. These programmes can be offered for individual students within already existing educational programmes, or be offered as a separate class in the same or separate educational institutions (p. 81).*

The following ISCED definitions can be used to support specific comparability factors. An explanation of why applying this definition is important for the proposed EASIE work follows each definition.

***Formal education** is defined as education that is institutionalized, intentional, planned through public organizations and recognized private bodies and, in their totality, make up the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognized as such by the relevant national educational authorities or equivalent, e.g. any other institution in co-operation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. Formal education*



consists mostly of initial education. Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognized as being part of the formal education system. Qualifications from formal education are by definition recognized and are therefore within the scope of ISCED.

Institutionalized education occurs when an organisation provides structured educational arrangements, such as student-teacher relationships and/or interactions, that are specially designed for education and learning (p. 8).

Explanation: Applying this definition to country data collection makes it easier to understand what is meant by non-formal education and therefore who should be considered as ‘out of formal education’ for data collection purposes.

*Programmes at **ISCED level 1**, or “primary” education, are typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e. literacy and numeracy), and to establish a sound foundation for learning and understanding of core areas of knowledge, personal and social development, preparing for lower secondary education. It focuses on learning at a basic level of complexity with little if any specialisation (p. 26).*

Explanation: Applying this definition to country data collection makes it possible to address comparability issues around the ISCED levels of specific programmes pupils are following.

*Programmes at **ISCED level 2**, or “lower secondary” education, are typically designed to build upon the learning outcomes from ISCED level 1. Usually, the educational aim is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which education systems may systematically expand further educational opportunities. Some education systems may already offer vocational education programmes at ISCED level 2 to provide individuals with skills relevant to employment (p. 29).*

Explanation: Applying this definition to country data collection makes it possible to address comparability issues around the ISCED levels of specific programmes pupils are following.

Secretariat:

Østre Stationsvej 33
DK-5000
Odense C
Denmark
Tel: +45 64 41 00 20
secretariat@european-agency.org

Brussels Office:

Rue Montoyer 21
BE-1000
Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 213 62 80
brussels.office@european-agency.org

www.european-agency.org

