



# MAPPING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

## Opening Address

### Per Gunnvall, Chair of the Agency

I would like to take this opportunity of welcoming:

- Deputy Minister of State for Compulsory Education, Mr. Zoltán Gloviczki,
- Representatives from the different departments and Units of the European Commission
- all speakers
- invited guests
- and the nominated Ministerial Representatives of Agency member countries.

Thank you all for joining this the second Conference of the Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education project.

We are extremely happy and proud that this conference has been officially announced as an event held under the Hungarian Presidency of the European Union and we are grateful to our colleagues in the Hungarian Ministry of National Resources, Department for Education for their assistance in organizing and hosting this Presidency event.

We feel this recognition by the Hungarian Ministry indicates the perceived high priority of the topic of this meeting at both the European and National levels.

On behalf of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, I want to reinforce how important the topic of mapping policies for inclusive education in Agency member countries. All countries are debating the critical issues related to tracking the implementation of new educational policies and legislation.

The justifications and pressures for this concern are very clear at:

- International level (as can be seen in the UN 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls for data collection and monitoring at State level);
- European level (as outlined in the Lisbon objectives 2010 and also European Council priorities and targets outlined in the ET2020 documents);
- National levels and the fact there are Representatives of 26 Agency member countries participating in project activities so far supports this statement.

We are very happy that the Agency is continuing to actively co-operate with Eurostat and the Units within the European Commission working in this area of work as combines our expertise and perspectives on the key issues are crucial if results at the European level are going to be meaningful and applicable.

The first project conference in Brussels co-hosted with the Ministries of Education from the Flemish and French speaking communities of Belgium, generated some very lively and interesting debates. A full account of this event and the main outcomes is presented in the full conference report available from the Agency InfoDesk.

I would like to highlight a number of key messages from that meeting that I find particularly relevant for us to consider over the next two days:



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- The main purpose of data collection clear should be providing evidence of effectiveness in education
  - Quantitative and qualitative data are of equal value and usefulness and one cannot be prioritised over another
  - There is a need for national level data collection, within European level agreements.

This last point was a very clear message coming from the debates many of you engaged in during the Brussels meeting. This seems to be a very ambitious aspiration for the MIPIE project – perhaps not one that can be achieved within the project lifetime, but definitely one key area that the project can provide relevant and timely information upon.

I am very much looking forward to our debates over the coming days ... I am sure they will be stimulating, productive and hopefully enjoyable.