

# **EUROPEAN AGENCY STATISTICS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

**Slovakia 2016/2017  
data background information**



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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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### How the official decision of special educational needs (SEN) in the country relates to the agreed EASIE operational definition

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#### Operational definition

“An official decision leads to a child/learner being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs.”

#### Criteria for an official decision of SEN

- There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team
- The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the child’s/learner’s (pre)school
- There is a legal document which describes the support the child/learner is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning
- The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process

#### Educational assessment procedure in the country

Children/learners with disabilities, intellectually gifted children/learners and those from socially disadvantaged environments are considered to have SEN (245/2008 Education Act, Section 2, Subparagraph j). Special educational needs are diagnosed by the Educational Counselling and Prevention Centres (245/2008 Education Act, Section 2, Subparagraph j).

The child’s/learner’s legal representatives or the school may propose initiation of the assessment procedure. However, the legal representatives must approve the school’s proposal for the child/learner to undergo assessment. If the legal representatives do not approve, the assessment cannot take place (325/2008 Order on the Educational Counselling and Prevention Centres, Section 2).

The educational assessment procedure at the centres involves a multi-disciplinary team. The outcome of the procedure is the proposal on the education of a child or learner in kindergarten, primary or secondary school (245/2008 Education Act, Section 11). The proposal stipulates the form of education proposed by the centre’s experts (integration, special class or special school) and it states whether or not the legal representatives agree with the proposal.

The proposal is accompanied by a report from a psychological, special-pedagogical and medical examination (if necessary), the individual education plan and other documents (if necessary).



### **How the multi-disciplinary team is comprised in the country**

The team usually consists of a special teacher, a psychologist, a speech therapist, a doctor and other specialists. Parents, the head teacher and teachers might also be consulted.

### **The legal document used in the country to outline the support that the child/learner is eligible to receive**

The 245/2008 Education Act and the education programmes for intellectually gifted children/learners and for children/learners with disabilities outline the support these children/learners are supposed to receive.

Children/learners with SEN are entitled to have modified educational content, forms, methods and approaches (245/2008 Education Act, Section 2, Subparagraph j). They should have access to special curricula, special textbooks, special aids and the support of counselling centres, including specialists available within them, e.g. special teacher, psychologist, speech therapist (245/2008 Education Act, Section 6, Paragraph 4, Subparagraph p; Section 144 Paragraph 2 and 3). Children/learners might be supported by a teaching assistant (245/2008 Education Act, Section 30, Paragraph 6).

More details on the support that children/learners are supposed to receive is outlined in the education programmes for children/learners with disabilities (245/2008 Education Act, Section 94, Paragraph 2) and for intellectually gifted children/learners (245/2008 Education Act, Section 103, Paragraph 5). However, their implementation might be affected by the decisions of school founders and head teachers and by the availability of the funding.

Children/learners from socially disadvantaged environments do not have special education programmes. However, they are entitled to:

- adjustments in the organisation of their education;
- adjustments in the environment;
- the application of special methods and forms of education (245/2008 Education Act, Section 107, Paragraph 1).

### **How the document is used as the basis for planning in the country**

The law and the programmes form the basis for the creation of the child's/learner's individual education plan. The individual education plan can:

- refer to the mainstream educational programme;
- adjust the mainstream educational programme;
- draw on the educational programmes for intellectually gifted children/learners and on the programmes for children/learners with a specific disability ([edicnyportal.iedu.sk/Forms/Show/3093](http://edicnyportal.iedu.sk/Forms/Show/3093)).

### **The formal, regular review process in the country**

By law, there is no obligation to regularly review the decision of SEN (re-assessment). However, as per the Education Act (Section 130, Paragraph 6), the child's/learner's parents/legal representatives may file a motion to review the decision with the Ministry.



The individual education plan may be reviewed during the school year. This is at the discretion of the class teacher/head teacher.

## **Proxy indicator for the 80% benchmark used for the country's data collection**

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The EASIE work uses an 80% benchmark of inclusive education. This is defined as:

“An inclusive setting refers to education where the child/learner with SEN follows education in mainstream classes alongside their mainstream peers for most – 80% or more – of the school week.”

### **Proxy indicator used**

Placement in a mainstream class implies over 80% or more.

### **Details on what the country proxy is**

If a child/learner is diagnosed with SEN, the Educational Counselling and Prevention Centres can recommend one of three different educational settings:

- Mainstream class in mainstream school
- Special class in mainstream school
- Special school.

Parents do not have to follow this recommendation on where to enrol their child. The final decision on admission to a certain educational setting rests with the head teacher.

Children/learners from socially disadvantaged environments may only be placed in mainstream settings.

In practice, the proxy means that only children/learners placed in mainstream classes of mainstream schools meet this benchmark.

### **Why this proxy was used**

Slovakia does not monitor the exact number of hours that children/learners with disabilities or intellectually gifted children/learners spend in mainstream classes (integration) or in special classes. However, it is assumed that the integrated children/learners spend most of their time in mainstream classes.

## **Detailed description of what ‘out of formal education’ means within the country**

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The 2011 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines ‘formal education’ as follows:

“[...] education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies and, – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such



by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g. any other institution in cooperation 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 recognised as being part of the formal education system. Qualifications from formal education are by definition recognised and, therefore, are within the scope of ISCED. Institutionalised education occurs when an organization provides structured educational arrangements, such as student-teacher relationships and/or interactions, that are specially designed for education and learning.”

(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011, *International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011*, p. 11).

### **Do the country definitions of formal, non-formal and informal education differ from the ISCED definitions?**

Yes, although Slovakia does not have its own definitions of these three terms. However, it mostly refers to the definitions established within the *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning*. In this Recommendation, the definitions of formal education and non-formal education are more or less the same as the ISCED definitions. However, the definition of informal education differs – it is more similar to ISCED’s definition of incidental/random learning.

### **How specific cases – such as home-educated children/learners – are considered**

Home-educated children/learners are considered to be children/learners who are educated individually (245/2008 Education Act, Section 24). Home education is only allowed for learners enrolled at ISCED level 1. Each learner has to be formally assigned to a primary school at which they need to pass yearly exams. Home-educated learners are considered to be part of formal education.

### **Children/learners who are considered out of formal education (meaning those not in formal education as defined by ISCED)**

The group of young people aged 15–24 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) are considered out of formal education. In 2016, the NEET rate in Slovakia stood at 12.3%.

### **How the population of children/learners who are out of formal education is defined**

Please refer to previous answer.

## **Provision of data on private sector education**

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The data collection covers all sectors of education, including numbers for the child/learner population in the private sector.

### **Private sector education in the country**

In Slovakia, there are state and non-state schools. Non-state schools include private and church schools. Non-state schools have to follow the National Education Programme.



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### **Child/learner population counted for each relevant question**

The dataset includes all children/learners from non-state schools.

### **Specific issues with providing data on private sector education and how these have been overcome in the data collection**

There are no specific issues with providing data on private sector schools. They are included in the official statistics.

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### **ISCED level age ranges**

The following are the most common (pre)school entrance ages and (pre)school leaving ages for the different ISCED levels:

- Age range in the country at ISCED level 02 (pre-primary): 3 to 5
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 1: 6 to 9
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 2: 10 to 14
- Age range in the country at ISCED level 3: 15 to 18

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### **Miscellaneous**

#### **Additional remarks, comments or explanations on the country background information**

In comparison to the previous dataset, socially disadvantaged learners at ISCED levels 1 and 2 are now included within the group of learners with an official decision of SEN. In the past, they were considered to be learners with SEN, but they did not have to be diagnosed with SEN. They were considered to have SEN on the basis of their family's income level. Now, after the legislative change, they need to be diagnosed with SEN due to the disadvantaged environment they are growing up in.