



# PROMOTING COMMON VALUES AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

## BULGARIAN PRESIDENCY CONFERENCE

Thursday 21 June 2018, 10:00 - 12:30

Council of the European Union, Justus Lipsius Building, Room 20.45



Bulgarian Presidency  
of the Council of the  
European Union



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RS 118/2018

*"In the ongoing debate on the future of Europe, it is paramount to underline that the European Union is a union based on common values. Education plays the most important role of preserving the values of our European family for generations ahead. While aiming at excellence in education, we need to make sure that every citizen has access to high-quality education from early childhood and throughout life, and according to their individual needs. If we want to generate the best ideas, we need diversity of thought and an inclusive educational environment in which everyone feels welcome to participate and to offer different perspectives."*

Denitsa Sacheva,  
Deputy Minister for Education and Science of Bulgaria



**TOWARDS A EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA –  
PROMOTING COMMON VALUES  
AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

**21 June 2018, 10.00 – 12.30**

### **Council of the European Union – Justus Lipsius Building, Room 20.45**

This event is organised by the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. It builds upon the Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching and the Council conclusions on moving towards a vision of a European Education Area adopted by the Council of the European Union on 22 May 2018.

Inclusive education is the approach for education in the XXI century. It is based on relevant concepts and values. First of all, inclusive education is an effective means to avoid discrimination and exclusion. Inclusive education is always related to the provision of high quality education for all, combining excellence and equity. Recent research on the link between inclusive education and social inclusion indicates that inclusive education increases opportunities for peer interactions and close friendships between learners with and without special educational needs and/or disabilities. At the same time, learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities educated in inclusive settings may perform academically and socially better than learners educated in segregated settings.

The Education and Training (ET) 2020 Working Group on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education has clearly indicated that education should go beyond equal opportunities and ensure the inclusion of the diverse range of learners and, that values need to be shared by teachers and learners. Values are part of the 'whole school approach', where learners, parents, teachers and the wider community are all actively involved.

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education is aware of the challenges of putting in place inclusive systems of education. The Agency position on Inclusive Education Systems approved by the representatives of the Ministries of Education states that inclusive education systems are seen as a vital component with the wider aspiration of more socially inclusive societies that all countries align themselves with, both ethically and politically. The ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers. The Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union has highlighted inclusive education as one of its horizontal priorities. The Presidency fully supports policies aimed at reducing the number of school drop outs and increasing the quality of education where no learner is left behind.

This event will provide an opportunity to share and discuss what the implementation of values within inclusive education means at both policy and practical levels.

# PROGRAMME

Moderator: **Daniel Bognar**, Ministry of Education, Hessen, Germany

**09.00 – 10.00 Registration**

**10.00 – 10.15 Welcome remarks**

**Denitsa Sacheva**, Deputy Minister for Education and Science, Bulgaria

**Tibor Navracsics**, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

**Ana Magraner**, Chair, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

**10.15 – 11.15 Session 1:**

***Council Recommendation on promoting Common Values, Inclusive Education and the European dimension of teaching***

Moderator:

**Rodrigo Ballester**, Member of Cabinet (Education, Culture, Youth and Sport)

Introduction by **Andrea Sebastianelli**, Student, Liceo Scientifico e Musicale 'G. Marconi', Italy

**Marie-Martine Schyns**, Minister for Education, Wallonia-Brussels Federation

**João Costa**, Secretary of State for Education, Portugal

**Brando Benifei**, Member of the European Parliament, Italy

**Stefaan Hermans**, Director, European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

**Q&A session**

## **11.15 – 12.15 Session 2:**

### ***Practical Examples of Implementing Common Values and Inclusive Education***

Moderator:

**Cor J.W. Meijer**, Director, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

Introduction by a student, Campus Saint Jean, Belgium

**Tanya Hristova**, Member of the European Committee of the Regions and Mayor of Gabrovo, Bulgaria

**Leen Van Heurck**, Deputy Head of Cabinet to Minister for Education, Belgium Flemish Community

**Patricia Perez-Gomez**, Structural Reform Support Service, European Commission

**Alen Kofol**, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Slovenia

### ***Q&A session***

## **12.15 – 12.30 Closing remarks**

**Devora Stancheva**, Student, Sava Dobropoljni High School, Shumen, Bulgaria

**Ana Magraner**, Chair, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

**Denitsa Sacheva**, Deputy Minister for Education and Science of Bulgaria

## **12.30 – 13.30 Networking and refreshments**



## **Denitsa Sacheva**

Deputy Minister for Education and Science,  
Bulgaria

Ms Denitsa Sacheva began her career at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and held a number of positions - from specialist to head of sector - at the National Centre for Social Assistance. In 1999, she took up the post of Head of the International Cooperation, European Integration and

Projects Directorate of the National Health Insurance Fund. She was then appointed Head of the Cabinet of the Minister for Health, with responsibility for relations with international institutions, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Commission. She then served as Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Policy before being appointed Deputy Minister for Education and Science.



**Tibor Navracsics**

European Commissioner for Education,  
Culture, Youth and Sport

Tibor Navracsics is the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport in Jean-Claude Juncker's Commission (2014 – 2019). Prior to this mandate, he served as Head of the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office, Member of the Hungarian Parliament, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Public Admin-

istration and Justice, and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. In the 1990s, Tibor taught at the University of Economics in Budapest. From 1997 until taking up office as a European Commissioner, he taught at Eötvös Loránd University's Faculty of Law and Political Science in Budapest, where he became Associate Professor in 2001. Tibor is responsible for improving the quality and efficiency of the EU education systems, in particular through the European Semester and the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework. Education in the EU must be modernised and made more inclusive if we are to meet the challenges of employability and innovation in the digital age and build resilient, cohesive societies. Tibor is also in charge of the implementation of Erasmus+, as well as other programmes in the field of culture (Creative Europe) and youth (European Solidarity Corps).



## Ana Magraner

Chair, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

Ana Magraner joined the Spanish Administration as a civil servant and worked in the fields of social services, culture and for the Presidency of the Government Spokesman's Office. She then joined the European Commission as a civil servant and worked for DG Environment. Ana was invited

by the Spanish Government to work for the Secretariat of the Schengen Convention in Brussels and for the 1995 Spanish Presidency as Counsellor in the related field of Home Affairs. In 1996 she returned to the European Commission in DG Education and Culture where she first worked in the field of culture and then mainly in the field of education. In her last Commission post she was Desk Officer for Spain and Portugal in the field of Education and Training in EUROPE 2020 until 2013. Since then she has been actively involved in social and cultural voluntary activities in Spain and, more recently, has acted as Chair for the European Agency for Special needs and Inclusive Education.



### **Andrea Sebastianelli**

Student, Liceo Scientifico e Musicale 'G. Marconi', Italy

Andrea Sebastianelli is a third-year student at Scientific High School. He took part in the project "L'Europa inizia a Lampedusa" with his school, and for him it was a really fantastic experience that allowed him to help his school organise meetings and events on integration and inclusion.



## **Marie-Martine Schyns**

Minister for Education, Wallonia-Brussels Federation

For ten years, Marie-Martine Schyns worked as a teacher and as deputy mayor in Herve. In 2007 she became deputy to Melchior Wathelet, and for two years sat in the Chamber of Representatives in the Public Health and Climate Commissions. After the elections in 2010, she retired from her

post as deputy mayor, but remained active as a councillor and as President of the Tourist Information Centre in Herve. She then resumed her role as Member of the Chamber, in the Public Health and Interior Commissions. In 2013, she was appointed Minister of Education, to replace Marie-Dominique Simonet. She spent two years as a Walloon MEP and as Head of the cdH group in the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, and is currently Minister of Education and School Buildings in the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.



**João Costa**

Secretary of State for Education, Portugal

João Costa is Portugal's Secretary of State for Education. He is a Full Professor of Linguistics at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at the Universidade Nova in Lisbon. He graduated in Linguistics from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Lisbon, and completed his PhD in Linguistics at the University of Leiden. During his studies,

he was a visiting scholar at MIT. His area of research is formal linguistics, language acquisition and development, and educational linguistics. He is the author of several books and over a hundred articles and chapters of books. Until November 2015 João Costa was Director of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and President of the Scientific Council of Social Sciences and Humanities of the Foundation for Science and Technology. Costa has been a member of the Scientific Council of the National Reading Plan, of the National Commission of the International Institute of the Portuguese Language, and of the Consultative Council of the Camões Institute. He has been President of the European Association of Language Students (SOLE) and of the Portuguese Linguistics Association, and has taught at a number of universities in Brazil, Macau, Spain and the Netherlands.



## Brando Benifei

Member of the European Parliament, Italy

Brando Benifei, European Federalist, is from La Spezia, Italy, and is one of the youngest MEPs. His main areas of legislative work in the EP are Employment and Social Affairs and Foreign Affairs. He is co-chair of the Youth Intergroup and vice-chair of the Disability Intergroup. Brando Benifei's parliamentary activities in the Committee

on Employment and Social Affairs include his current role as Rapporteur for the European Solidarity Corps, and he has been drafted key legislative and non-legislative reports on the social inclusion and integration of refugees into the EU labour market; on youth employment policy such as the Youth Guarantee scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative; and on digitalisation and rights of persons with disabilities. He was recently awarded the MEP Award 2018 for his commitment to employment issues, in particular youth unemployment.



### **Stefaan Hermans**

Director, European Commission,  
Directorate-General for Education, Youth,  
Sport and Culture

Stefaan Hermans is currently Head of the 'Skills' Unit in DG Research and Innovation at the European Commission. His tasks include the promotion of the development of the skills base to foster the European Research Area, the creation of an open and attractive

labour market for researchers, and the modernisation of the research and innovation dimensions of universities. Before joining DG RTD in 2008 as Head of the 'Universities and Researchers' Unit, he was Secretary of the European Employment Committee, following a number of posts in DG Employment, Social Affairs, Industrial Relations and Equal Opportunities. He has also worked as a project officer in Education and Training at the European Commission.



### Tanya Hristova

Member of the European Committee of the Regions and Mayor of Gabrovo, Bulgaria

Tanya Hristova has been mayor of the municipality of Gabrovo, Bulgaria, since November 2011. She holds two Master's degrees in English Philology and Finance from St Cyril and St Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo. In the period 2007-2010, she was deputy mayor responsible for

sustainable development in the Gabrovo municipality as part of the team of the then mayor. From 2010 until she was elected mayor in 2011, she was head of the cabinet of the EU funds management minister. In 2015 she was re-elected for a second term until 2019. She is the Head of the Bulgarian delegation in the European Committee of the Regions. She is a full member of the Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER) and the Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC). Tanya Hristova is the rapporteur of the opinion on 'Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture' which was adopted during the 129th CoR Plenary Session on 17 May 2018.



### **Leen Van Heurck**

Deputy Head of Cabinet to Minister for Education, Belgium Flemish Community

Kathleen Van Heurck has held the position of Deputy Head of Cabinet of the Flemish Minister for Education since 2014. She is responsible for policy matters for children with special needs. Kathleen was policy advisor in the Flemish parliament to MEPs from the Christian Democratic Party. At

the same time, she was also project manager for the King Baudouin Foundation in a project to tackle learning disadvantages for children in poverty. Before 2007 she worked in a child guidance centre, as a psychologist.



**Patricia Perez-Gomez Delaunay**

Structural Reform Support Service,  
European Commission

Patricia Perez-Gomez Delaunay is a policy officer and project manager at the Structural Reform Support Service of the European Commission, where she has been responsible for technical support projects in education since June 2017. Before that, she worked as a policy officer within DG Education

and Culture, Unit A2 of the European Commission, where she was in charge of monitoring education policies in Spain, Portugal and the UK in the European Semester framework and actively contributed to the annual Education and Training Monitor. In the European Commission, Patricia Perez-Gomez has also worked as a policy officer in DG Enlargement, responsible for Public Administration Reform projects in the Balkans region. In previous years Patricia had developed an extensive experience in the field of international cooperation and worked for a number of international organisations in many different countries, including the United Nations, the IOM, the Centro Internacional de Toledo para la Paz and the IFES.



**Alen Kofol**

Ministry of Education, Science and Sport,  
Slovenia

Alen Kofol is an educationalist in the field of special needs and rehabilitation, and has worked as a teacher, counsellor, and headmaster, and as Director of the Directorate for Pre-school and Primary education in the Republic of Slovenia. He currently works for the Ministry of

Education, Science and Sport as a schools inspector and actively cooperates with the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. Alen is the Country Partner Representative for Slovenia in the Financing Policies for Inclusive Education (FPIES) project, which is co-financed by the European Union. His professional path is determined by respect for the field of educational expertise, and Alen firmly believes that by focusing on achieving the goals, being open to innovative ideas and scientific achievements, and by encouraging and fostering a cooperative relationship between different fields of expertise, parents and learners in finding the right solutions and in planning the educational future of learners, we can bring about considerable changes in the field of education.



### **Devora Stancheva**

Student, Sava Dobroplodni High School,  
Shumen, Bulgaria

Deborah Stancheva is a 9th grade student at the Sava Dobroplodni High School in Shumen. She is studying music and English. She is a member of the school choir and takes part in concerts and competitions. She is a volunteer in the Shumen Youth Tolerance Club, where together with other

volunteers she has taken part in actions, campaigns and celebrations to overcome stereotypes and discrimination among students. In April 2017 she took part in the 'Academy of Tolerance - Meeting of the Students' Parliaments' in Sliven. The meeting was attended by representatives of schools from all over Bulgaria. There she had the opportunity to share views on the general similarities and differences between the children of all ethnic groups in our country, to acquire teamwork skills, to set goals and dreams and to learn how to achieve them.

A close-up, blue-toned photograph of several hands clasped together, symbolizing community or moderation.

# MODERATORS

# MODERATOR



**Daniel Bognar**

Ministry of Education, Hessen, Germany

In 2017 the School Committee of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz) appointed Daniel Bognar as agency representative of the German Länder. Mr. Bognar studied education at special schools and in inclusive settings at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University

in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He worked as a special education teacher at an inclusive elementary school and at special schools, was in charge of a special education school and headed a department in the State Education Office. Since 2010 Mr. Bognar is Head of Division in the Hessian Ministry of Education, responsible for primary schools, inclusive education and special education schools.

## MODERATOR



**Rodrigo Ballester**

Member of Cabinet (Education, Culture, Youth and Sport)

Rodrigo Ballester started his career with a two-year stint as an academic assistant at the College of Europe before moving into the private sector where he worked as a lawyer for the American law firm Lathan and Watkins. He then moved to the European

Parliament where he was as an adviser to the Spanish Delegation of the European People's Party (Partido Popular). In 2008, he joined the European Commission, firstly DG Justice, and then, as from 2011, DG Home Affairs where he was in charge of the external dimension of the EU's migration policy in Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa. He is now a member of the Cabinet of Commissioner Navracsics. He is in charge of education, and follows, among other issues, the Europe 2020 strategy, the Education and Training 2020 Framework, the Skills Agenda (including entrepreneurship) and the role of education in tackling radicalisation.

## MODERATOR



**Cor J. W. MEIJER**

Director, European Agency for Special  
Needs and Inclusive Education

In his former position as staff member of the Agency, Cor was responsible for major European-wide projects on subjects such as special education provision and inclusion in Europe, financing of special needs education in Europe, and classroom practice studies. He has acted as a consultant to the

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on special needs issues, as well as to various other national and international bodies (European Union, UNESCO). He is the co-editor of *New Perspectives on Special Education* (Routledge, 1994), *Inclusive Education: a Global Agenda* (Routledge, 1997) and *Implementing Inclusive Education: Issues in Bridging the Policy-Practice Gap* (Emerald Publishing Group, 2016). More recently, Cor has been writing a chapter of the SAGE Handbook of Inclusion and Diversity in Education.

# CONFERENCE VENUE

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