

Inclusive Education: A European Perspective on Policies and Practices

Cor Meijer (PhD), director
www.european-agency.org



The Agency

- 15th year of operations
- Main secretariat in Odense, Denmark and European Liaison office in Brussels, Belgium



Funding

The Agency is financed by:

- The member countries' Ministries of Education
- European Commission as one of the 6 organisations supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme



Member countries of the Agency

- Presently, the Agency has 28 full member countries: Austria, Belgium (French), Belgium (Flemish), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales).
- Soon: Bulgaria and Romania



The Agency's Mission

- Member countries' platform for collaboration in the field of special needs education (SNE)
- Our ultimate aim is to improve educational policy and practice for learners with special educational needs



The Agency's Activities

- Collection, analysis and dissemination of information on priority themes
- Participation and organisation of conferences, seminars and political events
- Liaison with the European institutions and international organisations – OECD, UNESCO, Worldbank



Agency Information Resources

The Agency offers various information resources, which can all be accessed via the website www.european-agency.org

- Thematic Reports
- Thematic Databases
- Newsletters and Electronic Bulletin

Agency publications can be downloaded in up to 22 member languages



Some working parameters

- Countries are at different starting points and have different ‘histories’ – we need to account for that and see it as a strength
- No-one has all the answers – countries have clear examples of good practice, but all countries are still ‘moving ahead’



International Policy Context for SNE

- UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action in Special Needs Education (1994)
- UN Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities (2006)



Selection of Past Agency Priority Themes

- Early Childhood Intervention
- Provision of special needs education
- Financing and inclusion
- Transition from school to working life
- Classroom Practice to support Inclusive Education
- Assessment of learners with Special Educational Needs
- Immigrants and Special Needs



Current Agency Work - 2013

- New Priority themes
 - Teacher Education for Inclusion
 - Organisation of Provision for SNE
 - Vocational Education - policy and practice in the field of SNE
 - Inclusive Education in Action (IEA)
- Information Provision
 - Qualitative and quantitative indicators
 - Key Principles for policy and practice



Special Events

- European Parliament Hearing in Brussels 2003
- Portuguese Parliament Hearing in Lisbon 2007
- European Parliament Hearing in Brussels 2011



European Hearing in Portugal



- The Lisbon Declaration ‘Young People’s Views on Inclusive Education’ is the main result of this event.
- We see a lot of benefits in inclusive education: we acquire more social skills; we live more experiences; we learn about how to manage in the real world; we need to have and interact with friends with and without special needs.
- Inclusive education is mutually beneficial to us and to the others



Parliament Hearing in Brussels November 2011



UN convention on the rights of people with disabilities (2006) – Article 24 - Education

□ States parties are requested to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels

- 153 signatories to the Convention
- 90 signatories to the Optional Protocol
- 110 ratifications of the Convention
- 63 ratifications of the Optional Protocol

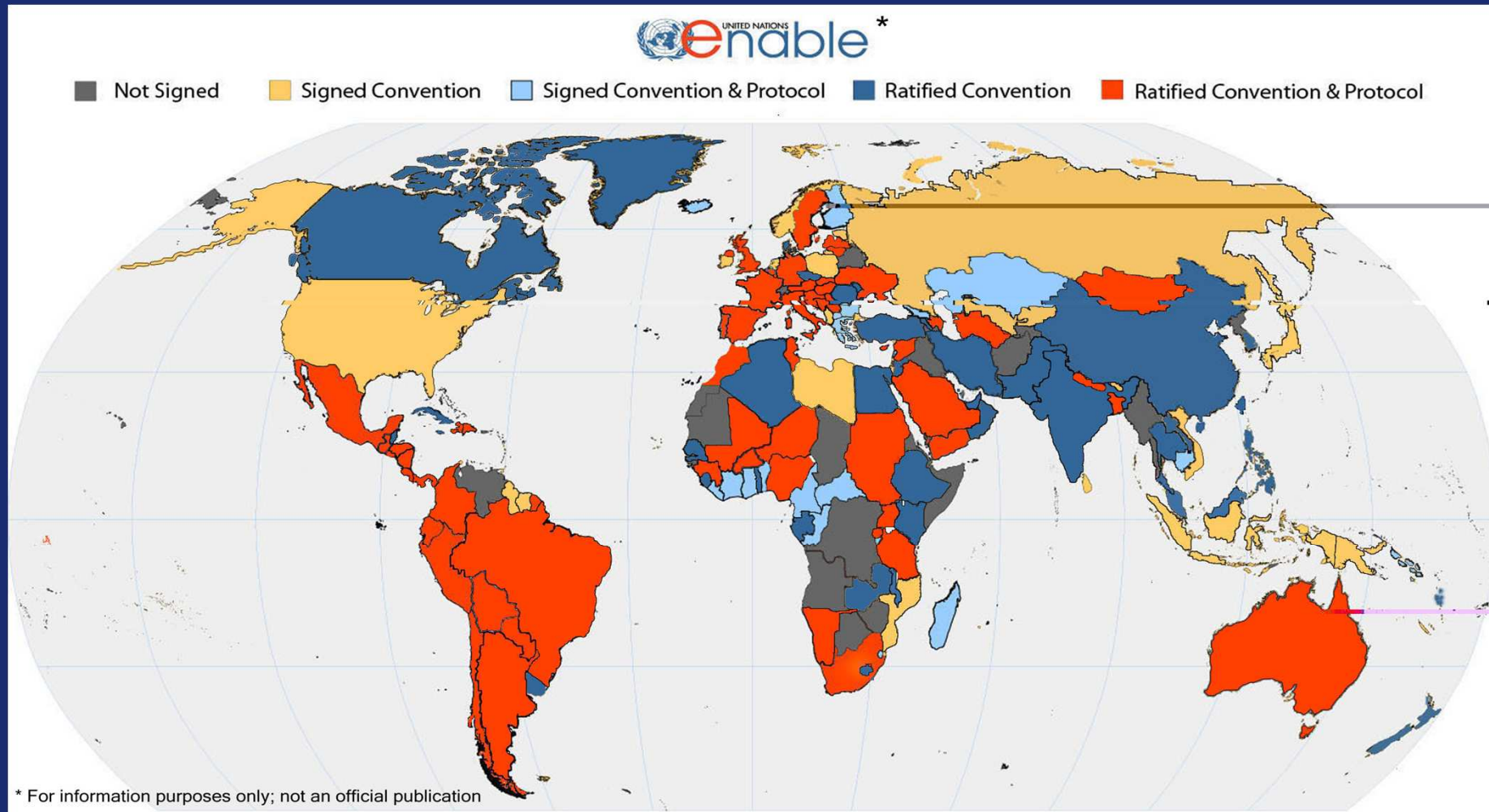


Ratification of the optional protocol by European Agency member countries

- Austria - 26 September 2008
- Belgium – 2 July 2009
- Cyprus- 26 June 2011
- France - 18 February 2010
- Germany - 24 February 2009
- Hungary - 20 July 2007
- Italy – 15 May 2009
- Latvia – 31 August 2010
- Lithuania – 18 August 2010
- Luxembourg – 26 Sept 2011
- Portugal – 23 September 2009
- Slovakia- 26 May 2010
- Slovenia - 24 April 2008
- Spain - 3 December 2007
- Sweden - 15 December 2008
- United Kingdom – 7 August 2009



Map of signatures and ratifications, 07.03.2012



Percentage of pupils in the compulsory school sector recognised as having SEN in 2010 (in all educational settings)

< 2.0%	2.01% - 4.0%	4.01% - 6.0%	6.01% - 10.0%	> 10%
Sweden	Austria France Greece Italy Luxembourg Poland Portugal Spain UK (England) UK (Wales)	Belgium (Fr) Cyprus Denmark Germany Hungary Ireland Latvia Malta Netherlands Switzerland UK (N.I.)	Belgium (Fl) Czech rep. Estonia Finland Norway Slovenia UK (Scotland)	Iceland Lithuania



Percentage of pupils with SEN in segregated settings

Up to 1.0%	1.01 %- 2.0%	2.01%- 4.0%	4.01% and above
Cyprus	Austria	Denmark	Belgium (Fl)
Greece	Bulgaria	Finland	Belgium (Fr)
Ireland	France	Hungary	Czech Rep.
Italy	Iceland	Latvia	Estonia
Malta	Lithuania	Netherlands	Germany
Norway	Luxembourg		Switzerland
Portugal	Poland		
Slovenia	Sweden		
Spain	UK (England)		
	UK (Scotland)		
	UK (Wales)		



Factors related to differences between and within countries

- Funding
- Population density



Developments in Europe

Developments

- A wider range and more flexible provision
- Developing funding models
- The development of resource centres

Challenges

- Academic achievements (output) versus SEN
- Secondary and higher education
- 2% of pupils in separate settings across Europe
- Preparing all teachers for inclusive education



Inclusive Education and Classroom Practice

What works within inclusive settings?

How inclusive education works?

Why it is working?



Some general conclusions

- What is good for pupils with special educational needs is good for all pupils
- Behaviour, social and/or emotional problems are the most challenging
- Dealing with differences in the classroom forms one of the biggest problems



Effective practices within the context of inclusive education

Co-operative teaching

- Teachers need support from colleagues
- Students get their support in the classroom
- Teachers learn from each others' approaches and feedback. Thus, it also meets the needs of teachers



Effective practices within the context of inclusive education

Co-operative learning

- Peer tutoring is effective in both cognitive and affective areas
- Moreover, there are no indications that the more able pupil suffers from this situation



Effective practices within the context of inclusive education

Heterogeneous grouping

- Students of the same age stay together in mixed ability classrooms, to respect natural variability in characteristics of students.
- Heterogeneous grouping is effective when dealing with a diversity of pupils in the classroom

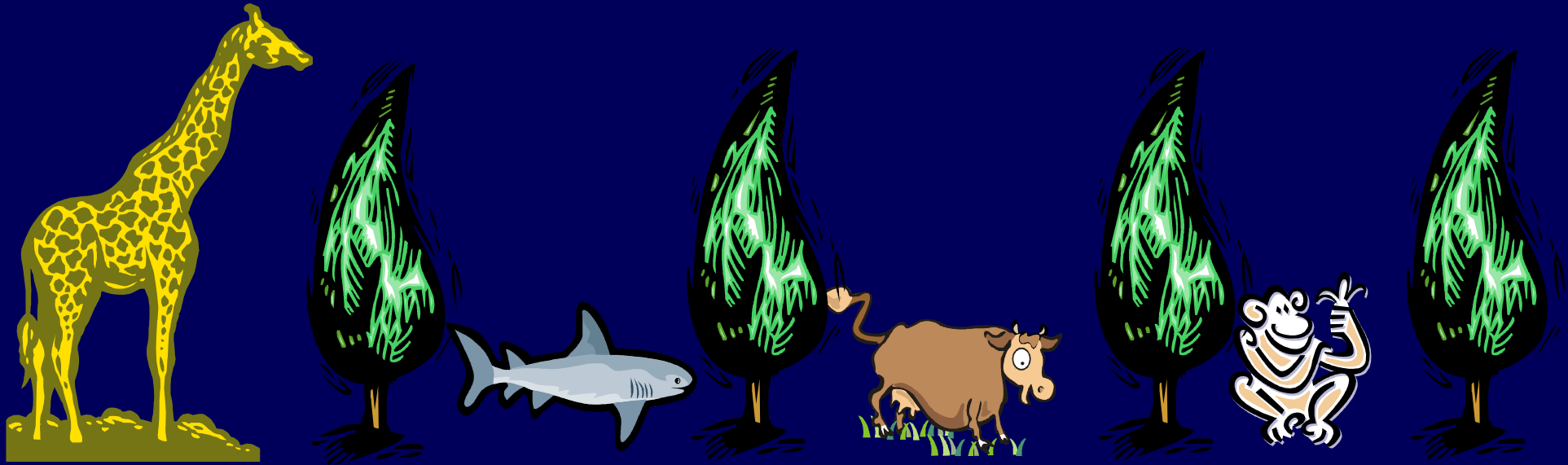


Social Cohesion and Inclusive Education

- Key Questions
- Normative position?
- Role of research?



We deal with differences!



Climb the
tree!



Contact Us

www.european-agency.org

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Østre Stationsvej 33

DK-5000 Odense C

Denmark

Phone: +45 64 41 00 20

secretariat@european-agency.org

