Synthesis Report

The synthesis report compares the country reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, FYR of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia using the following guidelines: existing legal frameworks, scope of policy development, statistics and indicators, teacher training, involvement of parents, pedagogical concepts, curriculum development and school organisation. It underlines the fact that the analysed education systems only recently started to pay full attention to education for children with special needs and the concept of inclusive education. Without a doubt, international policy documents such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child or the Framework for Action of the World Education Forum in Dakar have played a crucial role in identifying and implementing reform policies with respect to inclusive education. Though a number of countries share a joint historical and political background, the resources, scope and methods for adjusting education practice to students with special needs vary considerably from country to country. Nevertheless, some problems still remain comparable, such as the scarcity of reliable statistical data or the lack of public awareness for the concerns of inclusive education.
Introduction

All countries participating in the project include the education of “children with special needs” as part of their national education systems, even though there are different approaches and policies chosen by individual governments and education ministries. Since the political changes in the region in the early 1990s, national education systems have undergone extensive reforms and each country has developed a strategy with policies to implement changes.

In some countries (e.g. Bulgaria and Kosovo), the implementation of inclusive education is a priority of the government and part of national education law. Croatia also gives priority to children with special needs. In FYR of Macedonia, on-going education reform aims at the social integration of all children with special needs, including children with learning difficulties as well as gifted and talented children. In Moldova, the existing education system covers education for children with special needs in terms of offering special training to them but the government strives for the social integration of children with difficulties. The same goal is shared by the government of Montenegro, where the on-going education reform intends to create conditions to provide for the integration of children with special needs into regular education. In Romania, special education is part of the national education system. In Serbia, the status of special education and special schools is not clearly regulated within the education system, but an expert group for special needs education has been established by the Ministry of Education which has prepared an analysis of the current situation and made proposals for reforms in this sector.

In all countries, there is an official commission, body or expert institution dealing with the classification of children with difficulties and deciding on their enrolment in special schools or in the regular school system. Parents are usually involved in this decision process.

The process of integration of children with any kind of difficulties, disabilities or special needs into regular education is under way in all countries – even in those countries that do not yet have inclusive education as a goal in their legislation or policies.

In all countries, education for children with special needs is organised through:

- Special schools.
- Special classes in regular schools.
• Integration of children with special needs into regular classes.

The countries differ in the degree of difficulty and the number of children being integrated into regular education. In Bulgaria, more and more children are being integrated into regular schools, but there are special schools for other categories of disabilities. In Kosovo only a small number of children with “different disabilities” are integrated into regular schools while in Croatia some of the children with “developmental difficulties” are educated in special groups and classes within regular primary schools. In FYR of Macedonia, primary education is organised within a network of special institutions and in both regular and special classes in regular schools. In Moldova children with severe problems and difficulties are transferred to special institutions run by the Ministry of Labour. However, several pilot programmes on inclusion have been instituted. There are also special institutions for abused children, orphans and children with psychological problems. In Montenegro, there is a network of institutions for “children with difficulties in development”. Some inclusive schools and special classes in regular schools also exist. In Romania, according to the degree of the disability (medium and severe), children are enrolled in special schools. Children with minor deficiencies, learning difficulties and behavioural problems, etc. are integrated into regular schools where they are provided with special support. In Serbia, education for children with special needs is organised through special schools for children, special classes in regular schools and regular classes in regular schools including some children with difficulties or special needs. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, education for the majority of children with special needs still occurs in special schools or special classrooms within regular schools. However, attempts are currently being made to move toward one integrated education system that values all pupils equally.

The level and type of special support children receive in regular or special schools also varies from country to country, as does the extent and type of training of teachers and other personnel as well as the availability of other resources and equipment of the schools and institutions.

A wide range of interpretations of “special needs education” can be found in all countries. To describe “children with special needs”, different terminology is used within the respective education systems. The reports speak of “disabilities, difficulties, disorders, deficiencies, developmental obstacles, etc.” and it is not always clear whether these children are at risk or have special needs such as mental, physical, psychological, health or social problems. This results, in part, from the application of the model of “defectology” or from a medically-oriented classification which is still applied.
Recently, almost all countries have increasingly begun to consider school leavers, children of minorities, children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children with social problems as “children at risk”. An example of a broadening of the definition of children with special needs includes FYR of Macedonia, which intends to replace the expression “physical and psychological difficulties” with “special needs” and includes a broader social context in this definition. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania and Serbia also express awareness that poverty, the economic situation, poor living environment and children without parents, etc. need to be included in the category of “children with special needs”. In Montenegro, this also includes gifted children.

**Legal framework**

With the exception of Kosovo, which has a special political status, the countries in the study have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). All countries refer to international documents including the CRC, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) and the Framework for Action of the World Education Forum in Dakar (2000) in their respective strategy and policy papers.

All countries have undergone legislative changes relating to education since the political changes in 1989. Governments are aware of the necessity of education reform in their countries and they have undertaken enormous steps toward education for all and toward “European standards” in education.

All countries are supported in their efforts of education reform by the international community, especially within the framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe of 1999. This aims to support the region’s countries “in their efforts to foster peace, democracy, respect for human rights and economic prosperity in order to achieve stability in the whole region”. Ministers of Education and Higher Education also signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2003/04 in which they commit themselves to co-operation with respect to the European Union’s “Detailed Work Programme on the Follow-Up of the Objectives of Education and Training Systems in Europe”. Signatory ministries also stated that “Widening access to quality education and ensuring equal opportunities – taking account of gender equality – for national minorities, especially Roma communities and other disadvantaged groups including members of low income groups, people with disabilities, citizens from isolated rural communities, etc.” is a priority area for education development and reform.

In all countries, the Ministry of Education is responsible for education. In some countries, this task, especially the issue of special needs education,
is shared with the Ministry of Health and Ministry for Social Affairs or the Ministry of Labour. In addition, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the division into entities and cantons has led to differing education standards and individual characteristics of education policy.

In the course of legislative changes concerning education, almost all countries focus in one way or another on “special needs education”. For example, Bulgaria adopted a Public Education Act in 2002, followed by several amendments focusing on special needs education. In Croatia, the education of children with special needs is regulated by different laws concerning different segments of education. For example, the Pre-School Education Act gives priority to children with special needs, but at the same time, it is mentioned that this is not sufficiently supported due to budgetary and other resource problems. In Kosovo, the Law on Primary and Secondary Education provides education for all children. There is no special law for children with special needs but in a strategy plan for education development it is recommended that a policy be developed for education for children with special needs.

In FYR of Macedonia, the Law for Elementary Education covers the obligation to provide education for children with special needs, children with learning difficulties and for gifted children. The law includes several articles on the various groups of children with difficulties, disabilities and special needs. In Moldova, the “Law of Education” covers special needs education and in the “National Strategy of Education for All”, special needs education is one of the three priorities. Various cantons throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina still have many obsolete laws in practice. Nonetheless, the Overall Law on Elementary and Secondary Education of 2003 states that regular primary schools should educate children with difficulties in regular classrooms.


The Ministry of Education and Science of Montenegro set up a commission to prepare a first draft for a “Law on Education of Children with Special Needs”. This draft was forwarded to the Council of Europe for consideration and they recommended that the provisions of this draft be incorporated into the General Law on Education. This was done in December 2004. In Romania, according to some international documents signed by the country, the “Education Law” refers to special education –
especially on the question of integration of children with “light and medium deficiencies into mainstream education”.

Serbia has also ratified the international documents on education and children’s rights. In the Law on Primary School Education, there is no reference to children with special needs but in an amendment of 2002, children with “developmental problems” are mentioned and the law also defines the procedure by which children are classified. In a Law on the Basis of the Education System of 2003, general principles and objectives of education are redefined and for the first time the law speaks of an “outcome of education” that could have a long-term impact on special needs education.

Policy review focusing on special groups

How are special needs defined?

Not surprisingly, given the background in defectology in South Eastern European countries, children with special needs are for the most part defined in terms of categories of disability – many referring to the terms used in defectology. However, in many countries, recent reforms have broadened the concept to include ethnic minorities and even gifted children in a few cases. Serbia is a clear example of where the concept “children who require special social support” covers this broad range of children and is preferred to “special education”. This definition closely reflects that of OECD countries in general.

The main differences between regular and special education are seen in terms of placement (e.g. for the most part, children with disabilities are educated in special schools) but also in terms of the need to individualise teaching to meet the needs of the pupils. Changes in class sizes are also widely accepted as being important. Special schools usually have more favourable teacher-pupil ratios and in regular schools, class sizes were reduced if they included pupils with disabilities. At the secondary level, there is a tendency for special education needs students to be trained in vocational schools with the clear intention of future employment and not future higher education. One country report made it clear that a disabled student with the secondary school certificate would be able to access tertiary level education. In another, there was no link between special and regular education with parallel systems and no connection between regular and special schools.
How are concepts of integration and inclusion understood and defined? How can inclusions be implemented?

As in almost all OECD countries, special schools, special classes and regular classes are found in all South Eastern European countries. In a few, many schools are both institutional and residential. Following international agreements (e.g. Salamanca and the United Nations charter on the rights of the child), most countries have given considerable thought to developing inclusion. The understanding of the concept of inclusion, in contrast to integration, varies widely. In some countries, there is no difference in the usage of these terms. However, for the most part, they are viewed as clearly different – integration is understood as re-inserting special education needs students into regular classes and inclusion implies a substantial change in the way the school functions so that the school makes adaptations to meet the needs of the child. This will often mean that children go to their local school and receive individualised teaching. Countries recognise that this requires considerable changes in thinking about education provision.

To implement inclusion requires reforms at a number of levels in the system and in a wide range of factors. These include changes in the legal framework, changes in terminology, in financial provision, in the extent and type of services that support education, in teacher training – both pre-service and in-service (INSET), in physical access to the schools and in pre-school education. Parents also need to become more involved and the attitudes of teachers in both special and regular schools need to be changed. Parents of non-disabled students also need to become more accepting. Furthermore, better monitoring procedures need to be implemented.

In short, there needs to be cultural change at many levels, with new strategies and policies at the school level that must be implemented in practice. Some countries have addressed implementation issues directly and have envisaged the importance of the development of early intervention and the enrolment in pre-school education and the first year of primary school. In parallel, there could be the transfer of students with less severe disabilities from special schools to regular classes. In addition, some special schools become open schools for all children in the community. Teachers in special schools may also help with integration by becoming flexible and travelling from school to school. Certain teachers selected from this group may be given a more extended role to support and mentor in regular schools and to develop specialised materials.

Are all children educable and is it a government responsibility?

Although this was not always true in the past, now, in all countries, the government takes responsibility for the education of all pupils, at least up to
the end of primary education, although this responsibility might not always rest with the ministry of education. Nonetheless, because many of these changes are very recent in some countries, not all children with disabilities attend school.

**Are the needs of disabled and at risk students taken into consideration at all levels of the education reform process?**

The responses to this question were meagre and mixed, extending from fully to not at all.

**Are resources substantial or minimal?**

Resources were universally considered inadequate. In most countries, few if any additional resources were given to schools for the education of children with disabilities. Some special school staff and administrators also fear that integration will mean the loss of jobs for staff of special schools.

**What factors are considered to be barriers and facilitators of inclusion and equity?**

Facilitators were education reforms introducing positive legal frameworks, policies and the support of authorities, commitment to international agreements, the role of non-governmental organisations, school interest and flexibility, the professional autonomy of teachers, their training – especially INSET and positive teacher attitudes. Other facilitators are motivated and dedicated parents, school boards and community organisations including numerous domestic and foreign assistance organisations. Co-ordination among service providers, including auxiliary services such as for healthcare and social services, is an essential facilitator of sound education systems. One country identified the role of marking and the importance of a system that allows for individualisation. Individual education plans are another facilitator of success in inclusion and equity. Other facilitators are a positive socio-emotional climate including sufficient equipment and materials in the school and classroom. Resources already present in special schools are facilitators of inclusion when successfully taken advantage of in training and assistance for regular schools. The use of the media to promote reform was noted in some reports.

Barriers were manifold – the economic situation itself, the legal framework, lack of clarity in the role of stakeholders, lack of diagnostics, lack of pre-school education, lack of quality for special education needs in regular schools, lack of data, lack of teacher training, negative attitudes of non-disabled children (leading to isolation) and their parents and teachers in mainstream schools, prejudice, turf disputes over responsibilities, oversized
classes, over-demanding work, a lack of materials, inadequate resources, limited access to other essential services, rigidity, the difficulty of using a multi-disciplinary approach, the insensitivity of marking systems for assessing individual progress, subject teaching at secondary level whereby children meet a large number of teachers in contrast to the single class teacher at primary level and age restrictions on access to primary education.

New policy developments for disabled and at risk students

Children who are “at risk” are of increasing concern throughout the region. Bulgaria points to the many children who drop out of school, who are orphans and who may live on the street or may even become part of illicit trafficking rings. Many of the children who drop out and those living in poverty are from Roma families. Remoteness from school, social isolation, a lack of family interest in education, unattractive pedagogy and poor health are all given as reasons for leaving school. Interestingly, many of these factors were also identified in the OECD/CERI study\(^1\) on children at risk in OECD countries. In Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and some other countries, the government also provides some residential provision for such children.

It is clear that there are new policy initiatives intended to improve education for these groups. New laws on the rights of children are being put into place stressing, as in Serbia, democratisation, de-centralisation, de-politicisation and evaluation of the education system in the context of the general economy. More pressure is being put on regular schools to accept all children. The need for a child-centred and individualised approach for all children is widely accepted for both disabled (including those with the most severe needs) and at risk groups (such as Roma children) with more flexibility being allowed for these groups (e.g. in Bulgaria, special education needs pupils are not required to repeat classes).

Changes in class sizes are being implemented and training of professionals including teachers is being made more relevant. Some countries have strategic plans for specifically addressing socio-economic factors and a lack of family support. Vocational training is also being improved.

How do parents participate in the decision-making process regarding their child?

The importance of the involvement of parents of disabled children in their education is very widely accepted by the ministries even though

\(^1\) Inclusive Education at Work: Students with Disabilities in Mainstream Schools (OECD, 1999)
sometimes parents may not be open-minded about having a child with disabilities and in the past parental involvement in education has been minimal. In many countries today parents are involved in school governance at various levels and can even support their children in classrooms. In addition, parents are frequently involved in the assessment of their children and can insist on their being kept in regular classes even though the support there may not be as good as it might be.

**How is it decided that a child needs special education?**

The trend has moved away from a specifically medical approach, often based on principles of defectology that still exists in some countries, towards a multi-disciplinary approach involving a wide range of practitioners. Criticism was made of methods which relied on a diagnosis of the child being based on a single meeting. This could lead to serious errors, e.g. over the unconsidered diagnosis of Roma children leading to special school placement.

**Who helps special education needs pupils in regular schools?**

In many countries, regular schools have support services to help with the education of pupils with disabilities. In Romania, regular schools receive support services through itinerant teachers and inter-school centres for speech therapy. Classes are often smaller. In Croatia for instance, the maximum size of a class with one special education needs pupil is 28, with two it is 26 and with three it is 24. Teaching at home is provided for pupils who become ill. There is also specific career guidance for older students.

In other countries, there is very little professional support. In FYR of Macedonia, mobile defectology units have been introduced in the context of a pilot project, but other experts may also be available. In general, a great deal of pressure is put on parents to provide the extra help the child needs.

**Statistics and indicators**

The statistics and indicators presented in the national reports reveal a paucity of information on students with special needs in each country. Many countries state that data is either non-existent or very limited. As a result, a detailed analysis at this point is not justified. In addition, there is recognition that many special education needs children do not attend school. Furthermore, in some countries, these students find themselves in institutions run by different ministries (e.g. education, health, labour) and this factor, in itself, does not help in developing accurate databases.
However, countries recognise the importance of developing comprehensive databases in this area.

Where estimates are available, as in OECD countries, there are great variations in the figures. The proportion of children with disabilities in compulsory education vary from 1.7% in Bulgaria to 4.76% in Serbia and Montenegro (based on the results of a report prepared by UNICEF in the 1990s). Croatia (2.9%) and Kosovo (3.3%) are between these two extremes. (However, in Croatia, the census data provided gives a substantially lower estimate at approximately 1.3% for ISCED levels one and two. This estimate has been derived by the OECD from the data provided by Croatia).

Croatia and Kosovo provided data on special education needs students in different locations. In Croatia, approximately 66% of special education needs students are in regular schools with the remainder being in special classes or special schools. The picture in Kosovo is more complex because of incomplete data but it is indicated that 90% of special education needs students attend regular primary level schools. Bulgaria educated a small minority of students with disabilities in regular schools (0.1%). This includes kindergartens, schools and vocational schools and it is unclear at present how this figure relates to the figure of 1.7% given above for Bulgaria. In Serbia, approximately 6% of those with disabilities are in special schools.

Data from Romania show that over the last few years the raw numbers of children attending special schools has declined from 53,446 to 27,539 whilst those in regular schools has increased from 1,076 to 11,493. Simply adding the figures together for each year in the different locations and subtracting one from the other leaves 15,670 children unaccounted for. While this figure is a crude estimate, because annual changes in the school roll for all children are not given and therefore cannot be taken into account, it seems likely that some other factor is operating to explain the observed differences.

A couple of other features are worthy of note. Serbia and Montenegro provides estimates of children with hearing problems (1%) and visual problems (0.5%) both of which are substantially higher than OECD data (hearing impairment OECD range 0.05% to 0.31%; visual impairment 0.01% to 0.10%).

Serbia provided data on gender differences of students in special schools. At primary level the percentage of boys is 59.37% and girls is 40.63%. At secondary level the percentage of boys is 63.51% and girls is 36.49%. Similar proportions were cited in Kosovo for students with disabilities (61% boys and 39% girls) and 55% boys to 45% girls for students with special education needs in regular schools. This ratio of
approximately 60 to 40, being three boys for every two girls replicates almost exactly the gender ratios for these students in OECD countries.

Croatia also provided data on the numbers of other professionals involved in education for supporting special education needs students. But no comparative data is available to put these figures into perspective. Interested readers may find the data in the Croatian report. In Croatia, there are seven special schools for every 100,000 primary school students with an average size of 114 students per school. For secondary schools the equivalent figures are seven special schools per 100,000 secondary students with an average size of 87 students per school.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, “Duga” a local NGO carried out extensive research which details numbers of children and types of disabilities throughout the country.

In all of the reports, the limited nature of the data is remarked upon which emphasises the need for substantial investment and technical development in this area.

Teacher training

The reports clearly recognise the importance of teacher training for teachers of both disabled and non-disabled children but the impression is given that much of the training is theoretical. Training is differentiated according to the different demands made in pre-school, primary and secondary education. Training on special education needs students for regular teachers is very limited in all countries. Training for teachers to work in special schools with particular types of disability is generally available, often within the “defectology” framework. Training for teachers working in pre-schools is also very limited and non-existent in some countries.

However, despite the current limitations, many countries are planning to reform their training arrangements in the light of the needs demanded by inclusion. For instance, Bulgaria and Romania are planning for all teachers to receive some training about special education needs students.

A particularly notable feature is that much of the in-service training offered in this area is provided by NGOs and through foreign aid. University-based courses seem to be generally regarded as too theoretical.

Substantial efforts are clearly needed to develop appropriate training courses and local facilities for all teachers.
Training for other professionals

Courses exist in some countries for the training of other professionals such as psychologists and speech therapists but this is not universal in the region. Romania runs INSET courses for school managers and evaluators.

Parents

Most countries recognise the important role that parents play, not only in the running of the school at the level of the school board but also in the education of their children with disabilities. Some give them extensive access to classrooms so that they may support their children in the schools and although others are considerably more restrictive, the importance of parental involvement is recognised and there are plans to involve parents more fully in the future. In Montenegro, legislation which is currently being drafted dictates that parents can choose whether or not their child should be involved in the inclusive education programmes made available in primary schools. Many countries, such as Moldova and Romania, run courses and seminars for parents about the education of disabled children.

Pedagogy

The education of children with special needs in South Eastern European countries has been dominated in the past by the principles of defectology which of itself encourages the development of special schools provision. However, more recently the acceptance of principles of inclusion into regular school has created the opportunity for re-thinking the pedagogy for these students in almost all countries. Current views, involving putting the child at the centre of teaching and the development of individual teaching plans, are widely evident if not totally established in practice. A lack of resources, especially human resources and teaching materials, is identified as a serious limitation and few countries seem to have good access to information technology as a teaching resource. Particular influences in encouraging a “constructivist” approach have been the “Step by Step” programme and, in Kosovo, the support provided by Finland for the development of teacher training for special education needs students. Other NGO and pilot project work throughout the region also deserves recognition in this regard. Although these methods are being developed for special education needs students, there is widespread recognition that they are also useful for non-special education needs students. In general terms, however, a different pedagogy is foreseen for special education needs students which is more resource-intensive and more individualised. It is recognised that the full frontal teaching method, where the teacher is an information source
only, is not always appropriate and there needs to be change towards the idea of the teacher as an organiser of learning for pupils. This teaching method uses a more information-seeking, problem-solving and independent approach to their learning and thus engages the child more creatively – stimulating independence in learning, critical thinking etc. These are all believed to be essential cognitive strategies for functioning effectively in the knowledge economy.

Co-operative learning – in which children help each other – is also stimulated by this process and encourages and confirms the importance of team work and collaboration. Providing multiple approaches for these children, as described very fully in the Kosovo report, are important innovations to help special education needs children learn more effectively while keeping in line with their individual differences. These strategies enable class teachers to use some of their time to understand the learning difficulties that students are having and to use this information in new lesson plans and in the development of new teaching materials. These materials should motivate and activate children, be based on real life, increase social behaviour, be multi-sensorial (*i.e.* give the children the opportunity to use all senses) and meet their specific needs.

**Curriculum**

It is clear that in all countries there have been and continue to be substantial changes in the process of curriculum development, often implemented through newly established special needs boards or bureaus. A number of trends can be identified. Firstly, the control of the curriculum, which in the past was by central authorities, is now shared between central and local authorities and communities. Secondly, the influence of moves towards inclusive education has led countries to look at the similarities and differences between regular and special curricula and to begin the process of aligning them. There are still substantial differences between curricula in regular schools and those in special schools. Thirdly, there is extensive use of the individualisation of the curriculum through, for example, individual education plans (IEPs) and the use of formative evaluation through close monitoring of individual student progress. In Romania, the more extensive individual service plan (ISP), provides for a more comprehensive set of supports for special education needs students.

This curriculum development process is described in general terms in Croatia at four levels:

- General curricula set centrally.
Executive curriculum (education plan and programmes) with local implementation.

Operational curriculum prepared by a group of teachers or a single teacher responsible for a subject area across the school.

Class implementation by a teacher, which would allow for individualisation.

There is also the development of new textbooks and materials. All of these reforms follow from the widely stated and modern view that education needs to change so that schools can adapt to the needs of the children rather than children having to adapt to the demands of the school.

Another interesting feature is for special education needs students to be offered a more skills and work-oriented secondary curriculum. It would appear that there is a general view that special education needs students are not able to attend higher education institutions, which is certainly not the case for all of them. While the attention to education for employment is clearly of great importance for all students, expectations for special education needs students should not be restricted at the same time.

School organisation

In general terms, schools are organised centrally and have the same basic structures with rules about curriculum, hours worked, teacher to pupil ratios, etc. In almost all countries the teacher to pupil ratio is much more favourable in special schools in contrast to regular schools. In many countries, there are a range of boards and councils that ensure the involvement of staff, parents and pupils in decision-making in the schools. Schools also often work in shifts. For the most part these schools are not readily accessible to students with disabilities and although, in principle, the systems are supposed to be adapted to special education needs students, in practice, most countries report that they are not. Not only is physical accessibility a problem (e.g. lack of modification to the buildings) but there are also difficulties in the flexibility of funding mechanisms and in teacher attitudes in mainstream schools towards pupils with disabilities.

In Romania, education provision for students with cognitive and complex disabilities is in special schools while those with physical and sensory disabilities are in regular schools. Furthermore, in that country the examination systems allow for accommodations for special education needs students, e.g. in terms of extra time and also the presentation of the exams in bigger print or in Braille for students with visual impairments. These students may also go on to higher education if they pass the baccalaureate
examinations. Other countries report the development of special classes in regular schools to help bridge the gap between special school provision and inclusion.

Provision for children with disabilities is mainly through special schools, although all countries have policies, albeit at various levels of development, for creating inclusion. In some countries, special school provision is in boarding institutions. These schools are adapted to the particular needs of their pupils, have very favourable teacher to pupil ratios and are supported by additional consultants such as itinerant teachers, psychologists and speech therapists.

In general, there is a lack of accessibility, a lack of resources as well as hostile teacher attitudes and thus education for special needs students is in need of improvement. On the positive side, most countries report development of new policies and practices towards creating inclusive education. There is clearly a long way to go in all of these countries.
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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION – SYNTHESIS REPORT ................................................................. 9

CHAPTER 1 – BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA
Introduction ........................................................................................................ 29
Legislative framework ...................................................................................... 32
Policy review focusing on special groups ......................................................... 37
Statistics and indicators .................................................................................. 51
School organisation .......................................................................................... 67
Pedagogy .......................................................................................................... 71
Curriculum ....................................................................................................... 72
Teacher training ................................................................................................. 75
Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 77

CHAPTER 2 – BULGARIA
Introduction ........................................................................................................ 81
Legal framework ............................................................................................... 83
Policy review focusing on special groups ......................................................... 85
Statistics and indicators .................................................................................. 92
School organisation, pedagogy and curriculum .............................................. 94
Teacher training ................................................................................................. 98
Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 99

CHAPTER 3 – CROATIA
Introduction ...................................................................................................... 103
Legislative framework ..................................................................................... 104
Policy review focusing on special groups ....................................................... 108
Statistics and indicators ................................................................. 118
School organisation ................................................................. 125
Pedagogy ................................................................................. 130
Curriculum .............................................................................. 132
Teacher training ...................................................................... 138
Conclusion ................................................................................ 143

CHAPTER 4 – FYR OF MACEDONIA
Introduction .................................................................................. 147
Legal framework ......................................................................... 149
Policy review focusing on special groups ........................................ 152
Statistics and indicators ............................................................. 158
School organisation, pedagogy and curriculum .............................. 163
Teacher training ......................................................................... 165
Conclusion .................................................................................. 166

CHAPTER 5 – KOSOVO
Introduction .................................................................................. 171
Legal framework ......................................................................... 172
Policy review focusing on special groups ........................................ 173
School organisation .................................................................... 179
Statistics and indicators ............................................................. 182
Strategic plan for education of children with disabilities .................. 187
Conclusion .................................................................................. 202

CHAPTER 6 – MOLDOVA
Introduction .................................................................................. 207
Legal framework ......................................................................... 209
Policy review focusing on special groups ........................................ 211
Statistics and indicators ............................................................. 220
School organisation .................................................................... 225
Teacher training ......................................................................... 230
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Conclusion........................................................................................................232

**CHAPTER 7 – MONTENEGRO**

Introduction ......................................................................................................237  
Legal framework..................................................................................................240  
Policy review focusing on special groups.................................................................243  
Statistics and indicators .......................................................................................259  
School organisation ..............................................................................................262  
Pedagogy ...........................................................................................................270  
Curriculum .........................................................................................................273  
Teacher training ..................................................................................................277  
Conclusion .........................................................................................................277

**CHAPTER 8 – ROMANIA**

Introduction ......................................................................................................281  
Legislative framework ..........................................................................................282  
Policy review focusing on special groups.................................................................285  
Statistics and indicators .......................................................................................305  
School organisation ..............................................................................................309  
Pedagogy ...........................................................................................................314  
Curriculum .........................................................................................................315  
Teacher training ..................................................................................................322  
Conclusions ........................................................................................................327

**CHAPTER 9 – SERBIA**

Introduction ......................................................................................................331  
Legal framework ..................................................................................................333  
Policy review on special needs groups .................................................................335  
Statistics and indicators .......................................................................................347  
School organisation ..............................................................................................353  
Pedagogy ...........................................................................................................356  
Curriculum .........................................................................................................359
Teacher training ........................................................................................................... 362
Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 365
AUTHORS .................................................................................................................. 367

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bosnia and Herzegovina .......................................................................................... 369
Bulgaria ...................................................................................................................... 371
Croatia ......................................................................................................................... 372
FYR of Macedonia .................................................................................................. 375
Kosovo ....................................................................................................................... 376
Moldova ...................................................................................................................... 376
Montenegro ............................................................................................................... 377
Romania ..................................................................................................................... 377
Serbia .......................................................................................................................... 378