



CZECH UN YOUTH
DELEGATES PROGRAMME

Inclusive Education for Young People with Disabilities

Thursday, 14th of February 2019, 13.15-14.30 p.m.

Conference Room 9, United Nations Headquarters

Concept Note

Introduction

Reaffirming that access to education is a fundamental human right and that young persons with disabilities are not only beneficiaries but also active agents of change and of sustainable development, the side event aims to discuss existing and new approaches, policies and best practices that are crucial for achieving inclusive and quality education. Access to education is one of the main prerequisites for ensuring their equality and full inclusion. Therefore, steps should be taken towards providing inclusive education, as also set out in the 2030 Agenda and the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/71/165 entitled “inclusive development for persons with disabilities”.

This side event focuses on the promotion of inclusive education for young persons with disabilities, showcasing the progress of Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, but also focusing on a gap analysis that would help outline directions for concrete future improvements.

Context

The Europe 2020 Strategy calls for efforts to reduce the proportion of people aged 18-24 who leave education and training with lower secondary education at most to less than 10 % by 2020. According to Eurostat statistics from 2011, young people with disabilities and those facing long-standing health problems in the European Union (EU) were nearly three times as likely to leave education early, with rates differing across respective countries.^[1] Further, in 2011, 30.7 % of people aged 15-34 having a basic activity difficulty were neither in employment nor in education or training in the EU. This rate was twice that of those in this age group without basic activity difficulty. Moreover, at the EU level, approximately 30 % of those without basic activity difficulty attained only pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education. For those with basic activity difficulty, the rate was nearly 40 %. Differences across countries with regards to equal access to education are pronounced.

Across the EU, the rate of attainment of upper-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education levels remains “fairly similar” among people with and without disabilities.

Progress in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic

Bulgaria and the Czech Republic are committed to the right to education “without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity” for persons with disabilities, as set out in Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD)^[2]. This is evidenced for illustration by the statement of Georgi Panayotov, the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN and President of the 10th and 11th session of the Conference of States Parties to CRPD, who claimed that “The Convention [on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities] is one of the most progressive human rights treaties, recognizing the role of the people it is trying to impact”.^[3]

There are concrete efforts with the goal of attaining inclusive education for young persons with disabilities underway in both countries that can be used for gap analysis and best practice exchange.

Czech Republic

Lowering inequalities in education is one of the three principal goals of the Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020. To achieve lower inequalities in access, the Education Act was amended in 2016 in the Czech Republic and a large-scale inclusion of pupils and students with disabilities into mainstream education went underway with Decree no. 27/2016 Sb., in effect since 1st of September 2016. In the next seven months alone, approximately 14 000 more pupils (1.6 % of all children in primary education) joined primary education in basic schools due to the available support. A new regime for mainstream education is in formation, supported by an Action Plan for Inclusive Education for 2016-2018. The changes concern primary and secondary schools as well as school facilities for leisure-based education. Pedagogical-psychological counselling, career consulting, assistants and specialists in schools and school facilities, financial support to facilitate individualised integration into mainstream classes, as well as a diagnostic system are all key elements of the transition towards a more inclusive education in the Czech Republic.

Bulgaria

Bulgarian law for people with disabilities was amended at the end of 2018 and accepted and people with disabilities were newly constituted as partners in social change rather than as passive actors in receiving help. This happened on the 5th of December 2018 with Decree no. 297 The civic participation, accessible educational, administrative, cultural places and special financing for ease of access are the cornerstones of the newly accepted law and this was a major step towards improving the accessibility of the educational system for children

with disabilities. The law for “Protecting the children” was first introduced in 2000. Then it was one of the laws in Bulgaria with the highest number of amendments. This led to an improvement of the law and combined with the latest revision of the law for people with disabilities results in encouraging parents to let their children with disabilities to go to a mainstream school, not to a special one. The increase in pupils for 2018 alone was 19 %.

Questions to be discussed during the side event

- What are some successful practices of inclusive education for young people with disabilities?
- How can governments, the civil sector and the private sector work together to improve the access to education for young people with disabilities?
- What measures are required to enable persons with various disabilities to participate fully in the learning process ?

Objectives:

- Best practices sharing – the advancement of Bulgaria and the Czech Republic
- Success stories sharing from different countries
- Gap analysis – the way forward

We look forward to your participation!

[1] Eurostat, *Disability statistics - access to education and training*, 2011, available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics_-_access_to_education_and_training [last accessed 28th January 2019]

[2] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities : resolution /*

adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106, available at:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html> [last accessed 28 January 2019]

[3] UN News, “‘Unprecedented’ Conference on rights of persons with disabilities gets underway at the UN”,

13th June 2017, available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/06/559402-unprecedented->

[conference-rights-persons-disabilities-gets-under-way-un#.WlNvjf6osSk](#) [last accessed 28th January 2019]