



Gifted Learners  
A Survey of Educational Policy and Provision

European Agency for Development  
in Special Needs Education

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## CONTENTS

Preamble .....	5
1. A brief literature review on gifted learners: a general introduction .....	7
1.1 <i>Definitions and identification procedures</i> .....	7
1.2 <i>Gifted learners and inclusive education</i> .....	8
2. Analysis of the replies .....	12
2.1 <i>Definition of gifted learners and legislation</i> .....	12
2.2. <i>Identification of 'gifted' learners</i> .....	15
2.3. <i>Funding</i> .....	16
2.4. <i>Educational Provision</i> .....	17
2.5. <i>Other Aspects</i> .....	20
2.6. <i>Current debates</i> .....	21
3. Conclusions .....	23
References .....	25
Appendix 1 – Summary of member countries' replies.....	28
List of contributors.....	38





## Preamble

In a recent meeting with Representative Board (RBs) members and National Co-ordinators (NCs), the issue of education for gifted learners has been highlighted as an area that requires closer attention and further analysis. For this reason, a questionnaire has been sent out to all Agency countries. The total number of completed questionnaires is 24 [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK (Scotland) and UK (Wales)].

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of current educational policies concerning the education of gifted learners and their implications for practice. A brief systematic literature review was conducted in order to link Agency findings with current debates concerning the education of gifted learners. Literature written in English and dealing with issues concerning inclusion was prioritised. The responses given by respondents are only related to pupils attending compulsory school.

It is recognised that it is very difficult to find a common terminology to define gifted learners across countries, as the term 'gifted' is not always found within the legislation. Among the terms used by different Agency countries, the terms 'talented', 'able' and 'exceptional' pupils can also be found. However, for the purpose of this survey it was necessary to adopt a terminology that most countries could identify with. From an examination of the Agency National Overviews, it appears that the term 'gifted' is used by the majority of Agency countries. Therefore we decided to adopt the term 'gifted'.

The aim of this report is to:

- Have an overall picture of the current educational measures addressing the needs of gifted learners
- Understand the main debates available in the literature
- Disseminate information about existing policies and practice
- Stimulate further discussions concerning how to address this issue in future Agency projects.

The following sections are concerned with firstly, a general introduction of the current literature concerning the education of gifted learners and the main debates addressing giftedness. Secondly, an analysis and a discussion of the main themes is provided as emerging from the information gathered by the survey. This section is divided into five main subheadings each one addressing a specific area of investigation:

- Definition of 'gifted' learners and legislation
- Identification of 'gifted' learners
- Educational Provision
- Other Aspects
- Current Debates

Thirdly, the conclusion presents a summary of the main findings and it will identify potential areas for future developments. Finally, an appendix provides an outline of the replies given by each Agency country. In this final section, the information presented is the basic raw data.





## 1. A brief literature review on gifted learners: a general introduction

### 1.1 Definitions and identification procedures

The literature investigated for this study (Hobbs, 1975; Clark, 1988; Purcell, 1993; Baker, 2001; Hymer and Michel, 2002; White, Fletcher-Campbell and Ridley, 2003; Birch, 2004; Brower and Colangelo, 2004; Borland, 2005; Gray-Fow, 2005; Sternberg and Davidson, 2005; Clark, 2006; Eriksson, 2006; The Eurydice Report, 2006; Montgomery, 2006; Renzulli and Reis, 2006; Smith, 2006; Campbell et al., 2007; Rogers, 2007; Armstrong, 2008; Worrall and Steele, 2008) aims to provide a theoretical background to understand key issues around giftedness. It mainly covers authors who are committed to inclusive education and/or who have conducted research in the area of special needs education. The purpose of presenting this brief systematic literature review is to engage the reader with current debates concerning the education of gifted learners and to identify potential areas of further investigation and development.

Most of the literature investigated for this report usually refers to gifted learners as pupils who display higher abilities, more creativity and motivation to learn than other pupils in similar age groups. Giftedness is usually understood in relation to intelligence (see the Eurydice Report 2006). However, giftedness is not an easy term to define and it also varies a great deal depending on the context in which it is being used. Drawing on George (1992 in White, Fletcher-Campbell, Ridley, 2003) for example, there are over two hundred definitions of 'giftedness'. Likewise, the Eurydice study (2006) reports that:

*In research literature and psychology textbooks, a wide range of different terms is used to describe young people displaying all forms of giftedness. These terms may cover very different concepts depending on their origin, their historical context and the view of the intelligence and the talent that they denote. Furthermore, the terminology adopted appears to be related to the educational policies developed for the benefit of these young people. (Eurydice Report, 2006, p. 7)*

As emerging from this statement, the issue of definition is a crucial one, to understand how different countries respond to such a phenomenon in terms of policy and practice. The Eurydice report, however, indicates that the definition of 'gifted and talented' learners is most commonly used across Europe, although expressed in the country's language. At the same time, it is necessary to underline that in the UK (and related literature), there is a difference between the term 'gifted', which usually indicates pupils with high academic achievements, and 'talented' which instead refers to pupils with high performances in sports and arts (White, Fletcher-Campbell, Ridley, 2003).

Current debates concerning the meaning of giftedness show the importance of understanding giftedness as a fluid concept which should not only be considered in terms of 'genetic or innate abilities', but as a multi-faceted notion (Smith, 2006; Borland, 2005; Sternberg and Davidson, 2005). Giftedness manifests itself in different forms which require a variety of contexts and learning opportunities capable of grasping the totality of pupils' abilities. So for example, Sternberg and Davidson (2005) argue that giftedness is something created by society rather than something we discover, and therefore its conceptualisation can change over time and place. For this reason, it is very important to understand how the notion of giftedness is conceptualised in a country and how such a conceptualisation may impact upon policies and practice.



As far as identification procedures are concerned, the literature illustrates that although there is a general understanding that different procedures of identification should be used in order to cover different areas of development/skills/abilities (White, Fletcher-Campbell and Ridley, 2003), there is still an on-going debate concerning the advantages and disadvantages of using the process of identification as a way of addressing the special needs of gifted learners (Borland, 2005, Sternberg and Davidson, 2005). Therefore some academics (Hymer and Michel, 2002, Birch, 2004) investigate whether it is still necessary to identify pupils' needs or rather to identify contexts and how the latter can be improved in order to provide a better enhanced education for all students, including those who are more able. Nevertheless, the survey reveals that the majority of Agency countries use different identification procedures, although the classification criteria are not always established and clearly defined within the legislation.

### *1.2 Gifted learners and inclusive education*

The area of giftedness (and talent) has been the subject of an increasing amount of attention over the past twenty years (Gray Fow, 2005). The list of research and reports concerning gifted learners has increased, showing a growing interest of governmental bodies for the issue of how to meet the special needs of this category of pupils.

After Salamanca (1994) discourses concerning the inclusion of gifted learners began to circulate within European countries:

*... schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups. (The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, para 3, p. 6)*

As emerging from this statement, the educational provision addressing the needs of gifted pupils seemed to have undergone a similar evolution from segregation to inclusion (Smith, 2006) as for students with special educational needs. This has been particularly true in Northern America, where mainstream education was considered as being unsuitable for those pupils identified as being gifted (Montgomery, 2006).

However, as Smith (2006) also argues, although inclusion is about education systems 'accommodating' all learners, there has been a limited idea that inclusion is mainly about learners with special educational needs (i.e. with learning difficulties), and not about 'able' pupils. Instead:

*Inclusion, then, applies to able pupils just as much as any other group of individuals and it relates to the ways in which educational systems are conceived, constructed and delivered. (Smith, 2006, p. 9)*

This is particularly true as inclusion is usually interpreted as the educational imperative which aims at celebrating diversity and addressing the needs of all learners and not just of those minorities who attend special schools or who are economically or socially disadvantaged. Inclusion should aim at differentiating teaching and learning so that all pupils' requirements, including those of more 'able' pupils, can be met in mainstream settings (Smith, 2006).



Drawing on the literature (Hymer and Michel, 2002) barriers to the participation of able pupils are manifold and they include: the use of definitions of giftedness that reflect traditional conceptions of intelligence, or middle-class values. Other barriers include the use of standardised tests that do not reflect all exceptional abilities of minority children (Baker, 2001) and of children whose abilities do not correspond to traditional curricular knowledge (Sternberg, 2004). In addition, barriers are concerned with the exclusion of gifted pupils in segregated gifted programs (Renzulli and Reis, 2006).

Furthermore, some of the problems concerning giftedness are not only related to educational placement (i.e. special versus mainstream settings) but also to educational provision (i.e. what type of arrangements are provided for gifted pupils within a classroom). So for example, in some schools, many students begin to underachieve as a result of repetition of content and attention that teachers usually give to those students who are scoring below the grade level or are unmotivated. Sometimes, 'the most able academic students are at-risk for becoming underachievers because of the lack of challenge they experience' (Renzulli and Reis, 2006, p. 74). A similar point is made by Peter Csermely in Hungary who indicates the crucial role played by schools to favour or alternatively to hinder the development of creativity (Csermely, 2008). This is also true for the Netherlands whose policy is now based on the co-operation between schools and external bodies as well as between schools and higher institutions/universities. The Netherlands are attempting to bring excellent programmes into the schools rather than pulling out gifted pupils. For this reason, it is very crucial to promote the development of educational provisions which support participation of all pupils including those identified as being gifted within mainstream classrooms.

Drawing on Montgomery's study (2006) it emerges that there are two main educational trends concerning gifted pupils at the moment. The North American model which considers mainstream schools as inadequate to meet the needs of gifted learners and therefore it promotes forms of special provisions. This model, Montgomery adds, is mostly of a 'defectology' type and has influenced Europe, and in particular England. See for example the development of summer courses and special provisions in the UK. At the same time, Montgomery underlines that there is also another model which has been developed and it has also been adopted in England by NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education) since 1970s. The latter approach consists in promoting the education of gifted pupils in mixed ability groupings, thus contributing to increase the standards of education for the entire classroom. Finally, another model is the co-operation within schools and external bodies on a regular basis. An interesting example of co-operation is offered by the Csányi Foundation in Hungary (Fuszek, 2008) which provides support for gifted but disadvantaged pupils.

Numerically speaking, the Eurydice report (2006) shows that the school population that falls under the definition of gifted learners is between 3% to 10% and that most pupils identified as belonging to this category are most commonly educated within the mainstream school, although often supported by special or non-school based educational measures. In contrast, our survey seems to indicate that 'integrated' gifted education is the most common type of arrangement. This means that gifted learners are not only educated within mainstream school settings, but also within the same classrooms.

At the same time from an inclusive perspective: 'Does not every child have a gift or talent that should be nurtured and developed?' (Worrall and Steele, 2008, p.110). With this in mind, Worrall and Steele (2008) argue that the concept of gifted (and talented) education,



with a particular focus on issues concerning the identification, categorisation and classification of gifted and talented students' needs, can be rather uncomfortable to adherents of theories of inclusive education:

*The idea of identifying, assessing and making provision for society's minority of 'most able' youngsters raises questions about elitism and ethical concerns about resources being allocated to a 'group' that many educationalists may consider to be already naturally advantaged. All children have a right of access to a school curriculum, which has been designed to meet their educational, social and emotional needs by people who understand how they learn. Although all children have an equal right of access, some find it more difficult to exercise this entitlement than others. These children are often given labels such as 'special needs', 'bullies', 'challenging', 'disabled', or 'exceptional'. In each of these cases, as with 'gifted and talented', the label can act as a barrier to the successful inclusion of children into the life of a school and can help to deny access to the curriculum which it offers. (Worrall and Steele, 2008 p. 108)*

This statement indicates how issues concerning gifted pupils' needs may risk reproducing old paradigms which differentiate between normal and non-normal pupils (either disabled or gifted), thus possibly reproducing alternative pathways, also within the mainstream, specifically addressed to 'vulnerable' youngsters. In contrast, from an inclusive perspective all pupils' potentials should be empowered, notwithstanding achievements. Inclusive education should be committed to providing enriched and challenging education for all pupils, including the most able, without the need to categorise some of them in order to provide them with the best provision (Smith, 2006; Armstrong, 2008). For example, Armstrong (2008) argues that labels, such as those used to identify gifted students, or pupils with 'severe and learning difficulties' are inherently divisive and emphasise exclusive differences in children as they may develop prejudice among adults who work with them. All children and young people, regardless of difference, deserve to have their educational, social, emotional and cultural needs met.

With this in mind, within the literature investigated for this report, Borland (2005) supports a radical position which is an alternative to gifted programmes based on the process of identification of gifted learners. Borland (2005) suggests to develop 'gifted education' without gifted learners:

*The alternative I propose is that we try to conceive of gifted education without gifted children. In other words, I am suggesting that we dispense with the concept of giftedness – and such attendant things as definitions, identification procedures, and pull-out programmes – and focus instead on the goal of differentiating curricula and instruction for all diverse students in our schools ... Thus, not only would making differentiated curricula and instruction the norm for all students go a long way towards meeting the needs of students traditionally labelled 'gifted', it would make schooling more effective and humane for many students labelled 'disabled' as well as of those students thrown together in that agglomeration known as the 'normal' or 'average', a group that, in practice, is largely educationally undifferentiated but that, in reality, is remarkably diverse. (Borland, 2005, pp. 13-14)*

Nevertheless, Worrall and Steele (2008) still envisage the process of identification as inevitable. For others (Hymer and Michel, 2002) the concept of inclusion does not devalue that of giftedness, although it should be approached in a way which does not consider



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'giftedness' as a tattoo (Hymer and Michael 2002, p. 7) but as a recognition of individual difference, met by flexibility and differentiated challenge, 'Now isn't it that what inclusion's all about?' (Hymer and Michael, 2002, p. 8)



## 2. Analysis of the replies

The information provided in this section is a discussion of the main themes as emerging from the data collected by the survey. A summary of the specific replies provided by each country is provided in the Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

In this section, the first point which needs to be highlighted is that despite the similarities concerning a general understanding of the concept of giftedness in education, there seems to be enough difference in the policy which specifically addresses the needs of pupils identified as being gifted at a national level. Although all countries reported that the mainstream classroom is the place where gifted learners are mostly educated, there is still a great variety in the type of educational arrangements provided for them. Moreover, a particular emphasis is put on local/school solutions rather than on national policies.

### 2.1 Definition of gifted learners and legislation.

The information below is based on the replies to the following questions:

1. In your country do you have a specific definition of 'gifted' learners within your educational legislation?
2. Does this definition for 'gifted' belong to the category of SEN?
3. Have there been any recent legislative measures or policy initiatives for 'gifted' in your country?
4. In terms of your country's general understanding of the term 'gifted', please indicated what 'giftedness' relates to in your country.

According to this survey, the great majority of countries (17 out of 24) indicate that they do not possess a specific definition for gifted learners within their legislation. However, the countries that do identify gifted learners within their legislation (7 in total) generally refer to gifted pupils in terms of 'exceptionality' or 'variety of abilities' (e.g. Greece, Lithuania), 'high intellectual capacity' (Spain), IQ > 130 (France) and in general to pupils whose skills are 'above average' or who are more 'able' [e.g. UK (Wales)] when compared to other pupils of the same age group in compulsory education systems. Similarly, in the Czech Republic, gifted pupils are those pupils with 'a high level of creativity in a broad range of activity areas as well as in individual cognitive, motor, art and social abilities'. Finally, in Slovenia, gifted pupils are defined as pupils with special educational needs.

Apart from Estonia, France, Greece, and Slovenia, and to some extent also to Ireland<sup>1</sup>, the other countries (19 in total) indicate that gifted pupils are not specifically included within the population of those pupils identified as having SEN<sup>2</sup>. In Spain, gifted pupils were included in the category of SEN until 2006 when a new legislation which differentiated between SEN pupils and 'gifted' pupils was passed (Organic Law of Education, 2006). This new legislation identified three main groups of pupils requiring extra support: those

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<sup>1</sup> In Ireland the most recent general education legislation (*Education Act 2008*) included 'giftedness' under the definition of the term 'SEN'. However, this legislation did not provide any specific indication on how gifted pupils could be supported and was not followed by any policy or implementation measures. It simply suggested that pupils with special educational needs should, like all children, receive an education appropriate to their needs and abilities. In contrast, the most recent special needs education legislation (the *Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004*) did not mention or apply to gifted pupils. This reflects the fact that giftedness is not included with special needs education for administrative or resource allocation purposes.

<sup>2</sup> Information concerning gifted pupils identified as being part of the general category of SEN was provided as a response to this question but also as a response to other questions throughout the questionnaire.



with special educational needs, those with high intellectual capacity (i.e. 'gifted') and those who enter the education system late. Apparently, gifted pupils are not included within the general category of SEN because the latter is usually associated with a lack, or a difficulty in learning [for example in the Czech Republic and in the UK (Wales)] whilst giftedness is usually associated with issues concerning intelligence and learning potentials (e.g. cognitive, social, motor).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that not all countries possess a definition of SEN within their legislation and that even when they do possess a definition of SEN, this terminology does not necessarily mean the same thing in different countries. For example in France, the general category of SEN does not refer to 'disabled pupils' and consequently, gifted learners are included within the SEN category. In Norway (and in some ways also in Sweden), both categories of SEN and 'gifted learners' have been dismissed. In Norway, the definition 'adapted education' is currently being used to promote the development of an education system which supports all pupils and their individual requirements without the need to classify them.

Nevertheless, an increasing number of countries [15 as a total including Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Norway, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), and UK (Wales)] is now considering the needs of gifted learners within their legislation. For example, in the UK (Scotland), there is a new policy (2004) which includes gifted learners within the category of those students with 'additional support needs'. Thus, a 'Scottish Support Network for Able Pupils' (SNAP) has been created in order to promote staff development, policy and provision concerning gifted pupils.

In Switzerland, gifted learners' needs are addressed by an act which was agreed by different cantons. In the UK (Wales), there is a policy called 'Additional Learning Needs Legislative Competence Order' (2008) which addresses the needs of gifted pupils only if they fall under the SEN category (hence they have a difficulty in learning). Recently, however, another policy has been issued to specifically address the requirements of gifted pupils 'Meeting the Challenge – Quality Standards in Education for More Able and Talented Pupils' (2007). Instead, in the Netherlands, the government has recently passed a legislative measure known as the 'Policy Letter for stimulating excellence in primary education' (25th of August 2008). This new legislative measure has been discussed and approved in the Dutch Parliament so that new legislative measures are being implemented. In Austria, legislation allows gifted pupils to start schooling earlier and skip a year if necessary.

Interestingly enough, in Norway and in Sweden, despite the absence of a definition and of normative identification criteria for gifted learners, both countries are considering the possibility of passing a legislative measure that addresses the needs of all pupils including gifted pupils. In Norway, this measure envisages a reform of the curriculum with the introduction of an additional school subject called 'Educational choice' (*Utdanningsvalg*). This new school subject will be mandatory for secondary school pupils starting from the year 2008/2009 and it will allow pupils to choose what they like most and help them improve their individual skills and potentials without the need of undergoing any official procedure of categorisation. In Sweden, the government is now taking into consideration the possibility of passing a specific legislative measure to promote the education of high achievers in upper secondary schools.



Similarly, in Iceland, there is not a specific centralised policy concerning the education of gifted learners. However, the National Curriculum Guidelines for Compulsory Education envisages that gifted learners are entitled to enriched learning opportunities to develop individual skills and talents, for example by providing pupils with accelerated and distant learning in upper secondary school courses and in specific subject matters.

As indicated above, altogether only 7 of the 24 countries indicated that they possess an official legislative definition for gifted learners within their policy [Czech Republic, France, Greece, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain, UK (Wales)]. In these countries, gifted pupils are usually included within the group of students with high intellectual capacity. However, despite the reduced amount of official definitions within the legislation, most countries provided a general definition of the term 'giftedness'. For example, 5 countries reported that giftedness mostly applies to 'cognitive' talent (for example Cyprus, Germany, France, Netherlands<sup>3</sup> and Portugal). In these countries, giftedness is usually identified as a special form of intelligence (IQ above 130 in the Czech Republic and Germany or above 120 in the Netherlands).

When compared to the Eurydice report (2006), it seems to emerge that most countries [such as Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Slovenia, Spain and UK (Wales)] are now considering 'giftedness' not only in relation to a limited interpretation of intelligence (such as IQ) but also in relation to other abilities and talents including performing arts, sports, entrepreneurial skills, motivation, problem solving, leadership and team working, creativity as well as socio-emotional skills. For this reason in some countries they refer to gifted and 'talent' pupils [see for example Austria, Denmark and UK (Wales)].

Moreover, some countries [for example Belgium (French speaking community)], argue that it is important that these pupils are not only considered as a 'prodigy' but as pupils whose learning potentials must be adequately stimulated (see Denmark) in order to avoid the 'brain drain' phenomenon (see Austria). At the same time, other countries indicated that it is very difficult to provide a list of qualities that gifted pupils should possess in order to be identified as such [see UK (Scotland)].

As a consequence of this, Norway and Sweden have decided to reject the use of any official identification and classification procedure aiming at labelling and categorising some pupils as gifted and preferred instead to identify forms of 'gifted education'. In Sweden, they reject in principle the idea of identifying pupils as 'gifted'. This categorisation procedure, they argue, could become an obstacle for the development of inclusive education. From an inclusive perspective it is schools that have to modify their practice and offer adequate support capable of meeting pupils diversity without any need to categorise them in order to include them.

In addition, Slovenia and UK (Wales) reported that the concept of giftedness should also be interpreted in terms of an 'improved' education system which should provide extra services and alternative assessment procedures capable of meeting those requirements that are not usually addressed by ordinary schooling. Finally, in Belgium (French speaking community), it is argued that giftedness is concerned with the idea of 'educability' and how

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<sup>3</sup> In the Netherlands, although funding is allocated in relation to cognitive talent only, 'giftedness' is interpreted as a broad concept which include many different skills and abilities.



educational policies should aim at developing pupils' potentials rather than nurturing innate skills.

## 2.2. Identification of 'gifted' learners

The information below is based on the replies to the following questions:

1. Are the needs of 'gifted' learners identified in the same ways as the special educational needs of all other pupils?
2. What specific procedures and/or assessment approaches are used to identify 'gifted' learners in your country?
3. Are the funding mechanisms for allocating resources to support 'gifted' learners the same as are used for all pupils with special educational needs?

Interesting enough only 10 countries [i.e. Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Spain, Switzerland and UK (Scotland)] reported that they identify the needs of gifted pupils in the same way as the special educational needs of all other pupils (or have similar procedures). 12 countries indicated that they do not identify the needs of gifted learners in the same way as the special educational needs of other pupils. Specifically, 7 countries highlighted that they do not have any official procedure of identification [i.e. Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK (Scotland)].

However, 22 countries reported about specific procedures and/or assessment approaches used to identify 'gifted' learners. As emerging from the study, teachers' recommendations seem to be the most common criterion of identification used by the vast majority of countries. This criterion is used in 19 countries and it could be evidence enough to indicate that teacher education should play a central role for the development of education systems that support the needs of gifted learners. Secondly, parental nomination (18) is considered as a fundamental procedure of identification, followed by interviews with learners (15 countries).

At the same time, diagnostic criteria such as measured attainments and performance (17 countries), intelligence tests (15 countries), diagnostic assessment procedures (13 countries) tests of potential abilities (12 countries), and aptitude tests (10 countries) are still widely used by the majority of Agency countries. In Denmark for example, intelligence tests (i.e. IQ above 130) are prioritised as a means to identify gifted learners along with parental nomination. Specifically in France, parents or a private psychologist's recommendations are the fundamental criteria of identification. A statement of a psychologist is required in Germany with local variations depending on the Länder's, diagnostic assessment, attainment measurements and teachers' recommendations can be found in Hungary. In Ireland, recently published draft guidelines for teachers of exceptionally able pupils recommend a broad approach to identification, which may include formal psychometric assessment but also allows for identification by parents, teachers, peers, or self-identification.

In the Netherlands, the process of identification is not centrally defined as Dutch schools possess school-based modalities to identify gifted learners. Thus, the identification procedure of gifted pupils is left to the schools. In Portugal, the identification procedure is based on academic achievements/outcomes. In Slovenia, there is instead a three-step procedure which identifies gifted learners starting from the age of 9 until the age 10 and providing that there is parental support. After this period, if someone has not been



identified as a gifted student, he or she has an opportunity to be identified as gifted until the end of secondary school (ISCED 3; age 18–19) and also has the right to get an Individualised Education Programme. UK (Wales) reported about a flexible and dynamic assessment procedure which includes teachers, parents and pupils in the process of assessing giftedness.

In addition, Austria indicated that a combination of different procedures is also used to identify gifted learners, including self-nomination. In Greece, there are dedicated national institutions and agencies committed to the identification of gifted learners through special events such as the International Olympics of Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and IT. Specific guidelines concerning the identification procedure are provided in the UK (Wales) within the 'Curriculum of Opportunities'. Finally, only 7 countries use learners' portfolios as a process of identification.

In conclusion, diagnostic procedures are still prioritised although they are more and more used in combination with other non-diagnostic procedures such as teachers' recommendation and parental nomination.

### *2.3. Funding*

Altogether 5 of the 24 countries [i.e. Belgium (French speaking community), Estonia, France, UK (Scotland) and UK (Wales)] reported that they use the same funding mechanisms for pupils with SEN and for pupils identified as gifted. Moreover, 2 countries (Greece and Switzerland) indicated that the funding mechanism concerning the allocation of resources to gifted pupils identified as SEN pupils is not clear. The rest of the countries lies between two extremes. On the one hand, there are those countries which do not allocate any resource specifically targeted to gifted learners (such as Norway and Ireland), and on the other hand, there are those countries which instead have public resources officially allocated for gifted pupils (for example Austria).

In Denmark and in Switzerland, gifted pupils are eligible for funding only when they are identified as having special educational needs (i.e. they have some sort of functional impairment along with their giftedness) and therefore only when they have been assessed via diagnostic tools. In Iceland, there does not seem to be any structural mechanism of funding for gifted pupils. In the Netherlands, schools are autonomous bodies and can choose to use their extra budget to meet the requirements of gifted learners. Dutch schools receive general funding and decide to use their budget according to the needs of their pupils. In cases where children are both gifted, and also have serious psychological disorders or problems, for example autism or ADHD, care is provided through school based policies or through the healthcare system. Moreover, a new funding scheme has now been enacted (2009–2011) that allows primary Dutch schools to get funding to stimulate innovative approaches to support excellence by providing more challenging education in primary schools.

In other countries there seems to be a wide range of tools used to finance the education of gifted learners which include economic support provided by national, regional and local authorities as well as private bodies. In Austria, for example, special funding is allocated by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, although regional and private financing is also provided. In the Czech Republic, funding is discussed with the regional authority for the individual pupil and at the level of school. In Lithuania, funding is allocated via a National Programme for the Education of Gifted Children and Young People. In



Slovenia and in Greece there is a great deal of attention focussed on developing the potentialities of gifted learners and the latter are required to participate in international competitions. The Slovenian Ministry of Education finances primary schools to identify gifted learners and to provide them with extra teaching. As an option, the Slovenian Ministry can provide pupils with supplementary lessons and special individual or group learning support. When the gifted pupil attends secondary school, he or she may become a candidate for scholarships awarded by the Ministry for Labour, Family and Social Affairs. In Spain only three autonomous communities have developed specific programmes and related funding for gifted learners. Finally, in Norway schools rely on ordinary funding for all pupils, including gifted pupils.

In conclusion, what emerges is that gifted learners are not allocated a great deal of economic resources via normative school funding mechanisms, and that there are very few examples of structural funding mechanisms specifically addressing the needs of gifted learners. The information available indicates that decisions are mostly made at a local level and often the result of consultation with the local educational authorities/bodies/regions that consider individual cases/schools.

Thus, the majority of countries is characterised by a mixture between private extra funding and regular school funding (on demand). Regular school funding, though, is usually provided to gifted pupils when the latter are identified as SEN pupils – i.e. diagnosed as pupils with learning difficulties.

#### *2.4. Educational Provision*

The information below is based on the replies to the following questions:

1. What placement would be the most usual for a learner identified as 'gifted' in your country?
2. Please indicate what types of educational provision are currently made available for learners identified as 'gifted' (special programmes within the mainstream classroom, special programmes in special units/classes within the mainstream school, special programmes in special schools/academies, special programmes outside school hours, individualised teaching and learning within mainstream classroom).
3. For 'gifted' learners placed in mainstream settings what type of curricular adaptation/modification are 'available'?
4. For 'gifted' learners placed within separate settings (special schools or academies) what types of curricular adaptations/modifications are available?
5. Is there a specialised support service or resource centre specifically addressing the needs of 'gifted' learners available in your country?
6. Is there any difference in the arrangements made for 'gifted' learners in primary and secondary education sectors in your country?
7. Is the main strategy for meeting the needs of 'gifted' learners at secondary school age a differentiated school system where 'gifted' learners are 'streamed' or put into ability grouping?

Although there is an absence of consensus concerning the meaning of giftedness and the official criteria of identification, all countries reported that gifted pupils are placed within mainstream settings.

However, although the majority of Agency countries rely on mainstream settings to educate gifted learners, they reported that special settings/units and/or academies are also



available as an alternative. A small number of countries indicated that gifted learners can also be educated in separate units/classrooms within the mainstream settings, such as Czech Republic, Netherlands, Switzerland and/or in special schools, such as Estonia, Hungary, and Switzerland, and in private institutions and academies, in particular in Austria, Denmark and Estonia. In Iceland, although gifted pupils attend mainstream schools, they are specifically encouraged to attend one specific secondary school which puts the emphasis on gifted learners, provides them with additional activities and encourages them to participate in international competitions of science and mathematics.

A different solution entailing a mixed approach between special and mainstream classrooms is provided in Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands and Switzerland. Finally, in Hungary and in Lithuania gifted learners are educated both in mainstream and special schools.

However, once gifted pupils are placed within a school, either special or mainstream, a different type of educational provision is made available for them. Thus, 14 countries reported that optional special programmes are provided within mainstream classrooms. Only 2 countries ([Spain and UK (Wales)]) reported that these special programmes within the mainstream classrooms are compulsory. Similarly, special programmes in special units/classrooms within the mainstream setting are either not available (in 10 countries) or optional (in 9 countries). Educational provision in academies and private institutions is optional in 8 countries, not available in 9 countries, but compulsory in 2 countries (Greece and Estonia). Moreover, special programmes outside school hours (such as afternoon courses and summer courses) are optional in 18 countries while these courses are not available in Finland, Malta, Netherlands and in Norway. No country indicated that these special programmes outside school hours should be compulsory. However, in Iceland, special programmes outside school hours or summer courses for pupils from the age of 10 are encouraged. These programmes are optional and organised by the school in co-operation with the University and are paid by the parents.

As far as individualised teaching and learning is concerned, the survey highlights that this is optional in 15 countries and compulsory in Germany, Slovenia and Spain. In other countries, individualised teaching and learning (often intended as individual educational plans for gifted learners) is not available in Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, Norway. At the same time, Greece reported that although there is not any compulsory provision envisaged for gifted learners, some mainstream schools are currently developing projects to promote arts and music at an experimental level. Thus, 115 Greek schools are currently developing special sport programmes for gifted learners. In contrast in Malta gifted learners simply follow the curriculum as the other pupils do. Finally, in Norway, since May 2008, pupils have had the chance to develop specific individual skills (e.g. in mathematics, foreign languages, science and social studies) by choosing 25% of their curriculum.

The survey highlights that gifted pupils are placed within mainstream settings. Therefore, within the classroom, different types of educational provision are considered. Clearly, the study indicates that the most common type of curricular adaptation/modification is individualised support (20), followed by acceleration (19) and enrichment (19), often used in combination with one another. Counselling services are common in 17 countries, although in Ireland (National Educational Psychological Service) and in Lithuania (Special Pedagogical and Psychological Centres), these services are part of the general education system which addresses the needs of all pupils, including gifted learners. In Slovenia, for



example, counselling services are provided within each primary and secondary school where a 'school counselling team' or at least one school counsellor provides counselling services to all pupils, parents and teachers. As a rule, counsellors are usually school coordinators for gifted education provisions and are responsible for identification and counselling processes. In addition, differentiated curriculum is found in 17 countries and ability groupings in 16 countries.

Furthermore, in Greece there are special classes of sport, arts and music for gifted pupils attending secondary school. In the Netherlands, although all the above mentioned adaptations can be provided for gifted learners within mainstream settings, none seems to adequately respond to the needs of gifted pupils. Finally, in the UK (Wales) there are some health concerns regarding the use of acceleration for gifted pupils. Other solutions are therefore offered within the 'Curriculum of Opportunity' whose inclusive ethos requires that pupils work with their peers, compact their programme of study as a result of their ability to learn faster, and are involved in challenging activities.

At the same time, as anticipated before, although all countries reported that gifted learners are mostly educated within mainstream settings, some countries still indicate that gifted pupils can also be educated in special settings, such as special schools or academies.

It is important to notice however that even in countries in which gifted pupils are educated in segregated settings, the majority of countries emphasised that this does not happen on a regular basis. What is common is that gifted pupils mainly participate in special events (i.e. competitions) or attend short term programmes in private academies and special schools. For example, in the Netherlands, separation of gifted pupils is a new phenomenon and it attracts a great deal of public attention and discussion, in particular regarding possible negative social effects for gifted pupils. For this reason the Dutch government is developing a research programme (called *OnderwijsBewijs*) which encourages scientists and schools to evaluate these and other types of innovations in primary and secondary education for the highly gifted (IQ > 130). Finally, in the UK (Wales), segregated settings can be found for pupils identified as having Asperger's Syndrome.

For those pupils educated in separate settings, individualised support (11 countries) and special programmes (10 countries) are mostly found. 9 countries reported about ability grouping and enrichment as a form of curricular modification adopted for gifted pupils, followed by acceleration (7 countries).

Altogether 12 countries indicated that they have a special support service or resource centre which specifically addresses the needs of 'gifted' learners. In Austria, there is a Research and Support Centre for Gifted and Talented, a private body which is funded by public authorities (such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science). In Belgium (French speaking community), there is a psycho-medical-social centre; in Estonia, there is the Gifted and Talented Development Centre at the University of Tartu; in Ireland, there is the Centre for Talented Youth; in the Netherlands, there is the National High Ability Information Centre; in the UK (Scotland) there is the Scottish Network for Able Pupils (SNAP), and in the UK (Wales) there is the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE Cymru). At the same time, in France, some specialised support services, although not specifically addressing the needs of 'gifted', are available for this category of pupils.



Concerning the differences between primary and secondary education 16 countries reported that they do not differentiate between primary and secondary education for pupils identified as being gifted. On the other hand, 6 countries reported about a specific differentiated approach for pupils attending primary and secondary schools and, 10 countries provided some information about the different approaches being used. For example, 10 of the 24 countries, indicate that the main strategy for meeting the needs of 'gifted' learners at secondary school age is a differentiated school system where 'gifted' learners are 'streamed' or put into ability groups. This is particularly true for Austria, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK (Wales), where pupils are streamed depending on their academic achievements. In Germany, for example, gifted pupils are mostly educated in grammar schools. In Greece there are special secondary classes in arts, music and sport. In secondary schools in Ireland, pupils may be placed in ability groupings that are often related to the 'higher' and 'ordinary' levels associated with the state examinations for which they are being prepared. In Iceland, gifted pupils are mostly educated in upper secondary schools which put an emphasis on the education of gifted learners by providing them with additional activities mostly in academic subject matters, but also in sports and music. Similarly, in Lithuania there are some streamed intensive courses in academic subject matters.

In contrast, in other countries such as Belgium (French speaking community) and the Czech Republic, gifted pupils' needs are met individually, or by providing individually targeted extra curricular courses (e.g. in Estonia). A more integrated support for gifted pupils attending secondary schools can be found in Hungary and in Slovenia. There is instead a great deal of variety among schools and educational authorities in the UK (Scotland).

In conclusion, it seems that there is a trend (see for example in Germany) which aims at reducing the differences of provision between primary and secondary schools, focussing on a more individualised support offered within the mainstream settings or via extra-curricular activities without the need to separate and stream pupils into ability groupings.

### *2.5. Other Aspects*

The information below is based on the replies to the following questions:

1. Is teacher education specifically addressing the needs of 'gifted' learners in your country?
2. If yes, how is it delivered? (Initial, and in-service teacher training)
3. Which organisations, groups or individuals are most active in advocating the needs of 'gifted' learners in your country?

11 of the 24 countries reported that teacher education in their country specifically addresses the needs of 'gifted' learners, although this teacher training is not always mandatory. 3 countries instead indicated that teacher education only partly addresses the needs of gifted learners (Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands). In particular, in Austria, teacher education specifically addressing the needs of 'gifted' learners is mandatory and part of an integrated approach to diversity in education during the initial teacher training, while it becomes optional in all kinds of in-service teacher training. In the Czech Republic, Lithuania and the UK (Wales), it remains optional both at the level of initial and in-service teacher training. In Estonia, Germany and in the Netherlands, it is mandatory as part of an integrated approach to diversity in education within initial teacher training, but it is optional



during in-service teacher training. Instead in Greece, it is mandatory as a specific subject and as an integrated approach to diversity in education both at the level of initial and in-service teacher training. In Ireland, it is part of an integrated approach to diversity in education and it is mandatory within initial teacher training. In Portugal and in the UK (Scotland) it is optional as an integrated approach to diversity within in-service teacher training. In Slovenia, it remains optional both at the level of initial and in-service teacher training.

In conclusion, teacher education concerning gifted learners is mostly optional and provided within in-service teacher education. Specifically, it is mostly provided as an integrated approach to diversity (in 8 countries) or as a separate subject (in 6 countries). When it is mandatory (in 5 countries) it is mostly provided as an integrated approach to diversity within initial teacher training.

The majority of countries (19) reported that the needs of gifted learners are usually advocated by parents, followed by the organisations for gifted learners (15). Teachers support the needs of gifted learners only marginally (6 countries), whilst only 3 countries [Finland, Hungary and UK (Scotland)], underlined the role played by gifted learners' own voices in decision making processes.

## 2.6. *Current debates*

The information below is based on the replies to the following questions:

1. Are there other approaches and/or debates in your country concerning 'gifted' learners?
2. Please provide us with information about relevant key people, organisations, research studies or websites addressing issues of 'giftedness' in your country.

8 of the 24 countries reported that there other debates concerning 'gifted learners in their countries. For example the need to support a more holistic approach to understand giftedness in Austria. In the Czech Republic there is an on-going debate concerning the issue of elitism in relation to gifted learners and the fact that gifted pupils are first of all pupils who need to develop their social skills along with their peers.

Many countries reported about current research and projects being conducted in this area. In Greece for example, a great deal of research is conducted at university level<sup>4</sup>. In the UK (Scotland) some crucial debates concerning giftedness are currently being addressed by the Dundee Council, whose website will be called 'Supporting Learning in Dundee - Policy and Guidelines'. This will include a section on 'Gifted and Talented Pupils'. Furthermore, the City of Edinburgh Council has a publication entitled 'A Framework for Gifted and Talented Pupils 2006'. This document has been sent to all schools in the education authority area. In Slovenia, the ISCED3 policy of 'Educating the Gifted in Secondary education' is now being implemented. In addition a great deal of research on gifted learners is conducted at the Pedagogical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana where a new Gifted and Talented Education Centre will soon be opened. Moreover, still in Slovenia, there is an Expert Commission for Gifted Education within the National Education Institute (NEI).

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<sup>4</sup> Specific information about research conducted in Greece will be provided in the Appendix 2 containing a full description of all countries' responses to the questionnaire. Please refer to the Secretariat for a copy of the Appendix 2 (secretariat@european-agency.org).



Among the most radical debates identified by Agency countries there is the Swedish position (also very similar to the Norwegian one). Sweden has chosen not to categorize pupils according to different abilities or disabilities. Neither the steering documents nor the official statistics on pre-school activities, leisure-time centres, schools and adult education categorize children. A reason for not using a more detailed categorization is that these classification systems seem to contain reliability problems and risks of arbitrary interpretations. According to the Swedish Education Act, all children and young people shall have equal access to education regardless of gender, place of residence, ethnic affiliation and social and financial circumstances. Pupils in need of support shall receive it primarily in regular school and within the class and group they belong to. The Swedish curricula stress the importance of norms and values that are closely connected with inclusion. The importance of diversity is stated in the curricula. The latter also state that the teacher should take each individual's needs, circumstances, experience and thinking as the starting point for planning teaching and learning.



### 3. Conclusions

It needs to be recognised that given the limited amount of qualitative data collected via 24 questionnaires and the significant number of questions which were not answered within each questionnaire, the survey conclusions can only provide a 'snapshot' of current educational policy concerning the education of gifted learners in Agency countries. Clearly, some issues such as the impact of current policies for the development of inclusive schools and/or the opportunities to listen to the voices of gifted pupils themselves could not be addressed or were addressed only marginally. At the same time, it is worth noticing that despite the inevitable limitations, the survey identifies current crucial issues that could be used as a starting point for further consideration. It could be that due to these key issues emerging from the survey, follow up work could be undertaken.

Consequently, the study highlights the following key points of reflection:

1. In the majority of countries there is not any specific legislative definition for gifted learners. However, all countries possess a general understanding (hence a definition) of giftedness and gifted learners which is applied to intelligence.
2. Recently, the general concept of giftedness has shifted from a restricted and traditional view of intelligence (innate cognitive skills) linked to traditional curricular knowledge (academic curriculum) to a wider conceptualisation of giftedness which includes other abilities such as motivation, creativity, problem solving, leadership and social and emotional skills.
3. Only a few countries (7), include gifted learners within the general category of SEN. This is firstly because SEN is usually associated with functional disorders or learning difficulties, whilst giftedness is usually linked to the concept of 'ableness' and skills above the average. Secondly, it is worth noticing that not all countries possess a notion of SEN within their legislation.
4. There seems to be a shift of attention from pupils' individual needs to the environment in which pupils are educated and how the latter can be equipped to respond to all pupils' individual requirements. Thus, many countries have reported the need to modify classroom practices in order to meet the needs of gifted learners.
5. When considering identification criteria, diagnostic procedures are still the most common criteria of identification. Recently however, other forms of assessment, such as teachers' recommendations, pupils' interviews and parental nominations along with diagnostic procedures have been considered. This is particularly evident in recent developments in Ireland and in the UK (Wales) that envisage the use of teachers' and parents' recommendations instead of, or in addition to tests and other diagnostic devices.
6. Although non-diagnostic procedures in the identification of gifted learners are being used, funding is mainly allocated via diagnostic procedures of identification.
7. Gifted learners are educated within mainstream settings, and most importantly, within mainstream classrooms. However, educational arrangement is still provided in terms of additional or extra-curricular resources rather than as a form of differentiated instruction (e.g. structural pedagogical changes embedded in everyday teaching and learning)
8. Streaming for gifted pupils in secondary schools is not the main approach used to meet the needs of gifted pupils.
9. There is a lack of mandatory teacher training to deal with diversity in education, in particular in relation to issues concerning gifted learners, both within initial as well as in-service teacher training.



All these points of reflections suggest potential areas of further investigation for future Agency projects. These could include, the examination of policies with a focus on their implementation as an 'integrated' type of education for gifted pupils [see UK (Scotland) and UK (Wales)]. Another area of investigation could concern the advantages and disadvantages of identification and classification criteria linked to diagnostic assessment procedures only. Labelling, as indicated in other Agency works (e.g. Watkins, 2006) can be a barrier to the process of inclusion, rather than a facilitator. It would also be very interesting to investigate the possibility to move from a focus on pupils with SEN to forms of gifted/improved education (see Norway and Sweden), and therefore look for examples of how to differentiate classroom practice for all. A similar conclusion was also drawn within the Agency projects on Inclusive Education and Classroom Practices (Meijer, 2003) and Inclusive Education and Classroom Practice in Secondary Education (Meijer, 2005). Finally, a key issue to meet the needs of pupils identified as being gifted is to develop teacher education so that all teachers may be able to address diversity in their classrooms.

As indicated by Sweden and Norway, all pupils have gifts and potentials waiting to be developed, and individual differences and achievements can also be celebrated by creating an enriched learning environment. Moreover, as already highlighted in the Agency Dyslexia Report (Watkins, 2006), specialist teaching is good teaching for all with the only difference that it should also include special methods and tools, when necessary. Perhaps a good starting point is to take into account the needs of those pupils who are clearly neither stimulated nor challenged by existing curricula (Worrall and Steele, 2008) and consequently, promote an improved learning environment [see Slovenia and UK (Wales)].

However, it is important to remember that giftedness is characterised by multiple manifestations and that just like the concept of intelligence (see Sternberg and Gardner's new conceptions of intelligence), it has undergone many changes. Therefore, giftedness is more and more interpreted as a term which consists of a wide range of abilities that pupils possess, beyond the traditional cognitive interpretation which measures giftedness starting from IQ tests. Giftedness instead refers to creativity, motivation to learn, social and emotional skills, motor abilities, team working and leadership skills [see for example Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovenia, UK (Wales)]. A collaboration among countries could attempt to take into consideration the needs of all pupils in a more holistic and constructivist way (for example interactive process of learning) by supporting the development of mainstream schools. The latter could take into account the nurturing of all the above mentioned skills. At the same time, it should be stressed, as indicated by Austria, that the problem of brain drain is an issue and should not be underestimated when passing new legislative measures.

In conclusion as highlighted in most Agency projects (Meijer, 2005) 'what is good for SEN is good for all pupils' and this could be a starting point to reconsider the way in which ordinary teaching and learning are currently organised. A further suggestion envisages the possibility of developing schools which are able to address the diversity of the student population within the continuum of special needs, including gifted learners. However, when developing new educational policies, the need to listen to the voice of gifted youngsters themselves remain crucial (Lisbon Declaration, 2007).



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## Appendix 1 – Summary of member countries' replies

The aim of this section is to provide a summary of the country replies to the questionnaire. The raw data is presented in relation to each of the questions accompanied by a brief descriptive statement.

The full replies from each country are presented in a separate document. (Please refer to the Secretariat for a copy of this: [secretariat@european-agency.org](mailto:secretariat@european-agency.org)).

### Q1. In your country, do you have a specific definition of 'gifted' learners within your educational legislation?

*All countries replied.*

7 countries indicated that they possess a specific definition of 'gifted' learners within their legislation [Czech Republic, France, Greece, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain and UK (Wales)].

17 countries indicated that they do not possess any specific definition within their legislation [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, UK (Scotland)].

#### Q1 a. If yes, please give the definition below.

*9 countries replied.*

9 countries provided a specific definition of giftedness [Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, France, Greece, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK (Wales)].

#### Q1 b. Does this definition for 'gifted' learners belong to the category of SEN?

*17 countries replied.*

3 countries used or are going to use the definition of SEN to identify gifted learners [France, Greece, Slovenia].

14 countries do not include gifted learners within the category of SEN [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Spain, Sweden, UK (Wales)].

#### Q1 c. If this definition is considered as being part of SEN, please describe below in which way they are usually considered.

*7 countries replied.*

7 countries provided a specific description [Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, Norway, Slovenia, Spain].

### Q2. Have there been any recent legislative measures or policy initiatives for 'gifted' learners in your country?

*All countries replied.*



15 countries reported that there have been recent legislative initiatives for gifted learners [Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), and UK (Wales)]

9 countries indicated that they did not have any legislative initiatives for gifted learners [Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden].

Q2 a. If yes, please list them below.

*16 countries replied.*

15 countries provided specific examples drawn from the legislation [Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), and UK (Wales)].

1 country provided additional comments about legislation [Ireland].

Q3. In terms of your country's general understanding of the term 'gifted', please indicate what 'giftedness' relates to in your country? Please write below the current conception of 'giftedness' in your country.

*19 countries replied.*

17 indicated that they have a general understanding and definition of the term 'giftedness' [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

2 countries indicated that they do not have a general definition [Switzerland, Hungary].

Q4. Are the needs of 'gifted' learners' identified in the same ways as the special educational needs of all other pupils?

*23 countries replied.*

12 countries indicated that they do not identify the needs of gifted learners in the same way as the special educational needs of other pupils [Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, UK (Wales)].

10 countries indicated that they do have similar procedures [Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland)].

1 country indicated that the procedure is not clear [Netherlands].

Q4 a. If no, please describe the identification procedures for 'gifted' learners below.

*12 countries replied.*

12 countries provided information about identification procedures [Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, UK (Wales)].



Q5. What specific procedures and/or assessment approaches are used to identify 'gifted' learners in your country? (Please indicate more than one option if relevant).

*22 countries replied.*

The countries reported the following procedures:

- 19 countries indicated teachers' recommendations [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].
- 18 countries indicated parental nomination [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].
- 17 countries indicated measured attainments and performances [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].
- 15 countries indicated intelligence tests [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland].
- 15 countries indicated interviews with learners [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Wales)].
- 13 countries indicated diagnostic assessment procedures [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Wales)].
- 12 countries indicated tests of potential abilities [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland].
- 10 countries indicated aptitude tests [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland].
- 7 countries indicated learners' portfolios [Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovenia].

Q5a. If you have different procedures for identification, please describe them below.

*11 countries replied.*

11 countries provided examples of identification procedures [Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, UK (Wales)].

Q6. Are the funding mechanisms for allocating resources to support 'gifted' learners the same as are used for all pupils with special educational needs?

*23 countries replied.*

15 countries reported that they do not use the same funding mechanisms as for children with special educational needs [Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Spain].



5 countries reported clearly that they use the same funding mechanisms used for pupils with special educational needs [Belgium (French speaking community), Estonia, France, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

2 countries indicated that this funding mechanism is not clear, and that they might sometimes use the same funding mechanisms as used for pupils with special educational needs [Greece and Switzerland].

Q6a. If no, please describe what specific funding mechanisms there are in relation to resources for 'gifted' learners below.

*18 countries replied.*

18 countries reported information about funding mechanisms [Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland].

Q7. What placement would be most usual for a learner identified as 'gifted' in your country?

*23 countries replied.*

Specifically, Agency countries provided the following information concerning educational placement:

- 23 countries indicated mainstream settings [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].
- 5 countries indicated a mixed approach between special and mainstream classroom [Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Switzerland].
- 3 countries indicated special unit/classroom within the mainstream school [Czech Republic, Netherlands, Switzerland].
- 3 countries indicated special school – state education – [Estonia, Hungary, Switzerland].
- 3 countries indicated academy/institute for 'gifted' learners – private education – [Austria, Denmark, Estonia].
- 2 countries indicated a mixed approach between special and mainstream school [Hungary, Lithuania].

Q7a. If none of these placements are usual, please describe what type of placement is usually provided for learners identified as 'gifted' in your country below.

*5 countries replied.*

5 countries indicated additional information concerning placement [France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Netherlands].

Q8. Please indicate what different types of educational provision are currently made available for learners identified as 'gifted'. (Please indicate more than one option if relevant).

*23 countries replied.*

Agency countries reported the following information:

8i. Special programmes within the mainstream classroom are:



- Optional in 14 countries [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Switzerland and UK (Scotland)].

- Not available in 6 countries [Finland, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway].

- Compulsory in 2 countries [Spain, UK (Wales)].

8ii. Special programmes in special units/classes within the mainstream school are:

- Optional in 9 countries [Austria, Denmark, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Switzerland].

- Not available in 10 countries [Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Spain, UK (Wales)].

8iii. Special programmes in special schools/academies are:

- Optional in 8 countries [Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Netherlands, Switzerland].

- Not available in 9 countries [Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Spain, UK (Wales)].

- Compulsory in 2 countries [Estonia, Greece].

8iv. Special programmes outside school hours (for example afternoon advanced courses, summer seminars) are:

- Optional in 18 countries [Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

- Not available in 4 countries [Finland, Malta, Netherlands, Norway].

8v. Individualised teaching and learning within the mainstream classroom (for example individual education plans) are:

- Optional in 15 countries [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

- Not available in 5 countries [Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, Norway].

- Compulsory in 3 countries [Germany, Slovenia, Spain].

8a. If none of the arrangements listed above is relevant for you, please describe the types of provision made available in your country below.

*4 countries replied.*



4 countries provided additional information about arrangements [Greece, Iceland, Malta, Norway].

9. For 'gifted' learners placed in mainstream settings what type of curricular adaptation/modification are 'available? (Please indicate more than one option if relevant).  
*22 countries replied.*

- 20 countries indicated individualised support [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

- 19 countries indicated acceleration – advancing in subject areas or skipping a year [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

- 19 countries indicated enrichment – enriched learning packages [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Wales)].

- 17 countries indicated counselling services [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland].

- 17 countries indicated differentiation or differentiated curriculum [Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Wales)].

- 16 countries indicated ability grouping [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

Q9a. If none of the above options is relevant, please describe what type of arrangements are currently available within mainstream settings for 'gifted' learners in your country:  
*5 countries replied.*

5 countries provided additional information concerning arrangement in mainstream settings [Greece, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, and UK (Wales)].

Q10. For 'gifted' learners placed in separate settings (special schools or academies) what type of curricular adaptation/modification are available? (Please indicate more than one option if relevant).  
*18 countries replied.*

Agency countries reported the following information:

- 11 countries indicated individualised support [Austria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

- 10 countries indicated special programmes [Austria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

- 9 countries indicated ability grouping [Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

- 9 countries indicated enrichment [Austria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK (Wales)].



- 7 countries indicated acceleration [Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK (Scotland)].

Q10a. If none of the above options is relevant, please describe below what type of arrangements are currently available within separate settings for 'gifted' learners in your country.

*10 countries replied.*

10 countries provided additional clarifications concerning educational arrangement in special settings [Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Netherlands, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, UK (Wales)].

Q11. Is there a specialised support service or resource centre specifically addressing the needs of 'gifted' learners available in your country?

*22 countries replied.*

12 countries replied that they have a support service or a resource centre specifically addressing the needs of gifted learners [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

10 countries reported that they do not have a support service or a resource centre specifically addressing the needs of gifted learners [Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Slovenia].

Q11a. If yes, please describe below how it is organised.

*14 countries replied.*

14 countries provided information about the support service or resource centre [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

Q12. Is there any difference in the arrangements made for 'gifted' learners in primary and secondary education sectors in your country?

*22 countries replied.*

16 countries replied that there is not any difference in the arrangement made for gifted learners in primary and secondary education [Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

6 countries replied that there is a difference in the arrangement made for 'gifted' learners in primary and secondary education [Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovenia].

Q12.a. If yes, please describe these differences and the main reasons for them below.

*6 countries replied.*



6 countries provided additional information concerning the difference in the arrangement made for gifted learners in primary and secondary education [Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovenia].

Q13. Is the main strategy for meeting the needs of 'gifted' learners at secondary school age a differentiated school system where 'gifted' learners are 'streamed' or put into ability groups?

*21 countries replied.*

9 countries reported that the main strategy is a differentiated school system where 'gifted' learners are 'streamed' or put into ability groupings [Austria, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK (Wales)].

12 countries reported that the main strategy is not a differentiated school system where 'gifted' learners are 'streamed' or put into ability groupings [Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, UK (Scotland)].

Q13 a. If yes, please describe the provision in this differentiated approach below.

*10 countries replied.*

10 countries provided specific indications about differentiated approach [Austria, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK (Wales)].

Q13 b. If no, please describe the provision you do have for secondary aged pupils below.

*9 countries replied.*

9 countries provided information about secondary school aged gifted pupils [Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Hungary, Iceland, Slovenia, Spain, UK (Scotland)].

Q14. Is teacher education specifically addressing the needs of 'gifted' learners available in your country?

*23 countries replied.*

11 countries indicated that they have teacher education specifically addressing the needs of 'gifted' learners [Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia; UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

3 countries reported that teacher education only partly addresses the needs of 'gifted' learners [Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands].

10 countries replied that teacher education does not specifically address the needs of 'gifted' learners [Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, Norway, Switzerland].

Q14a. If yes, how is it delivered? (Please indicate more than one option if relevant).

*23 countries replied.*

Agency countries provided the following information about teacher education for gifted learners:



- It is a separate subject in initial teacher training and it is optional in the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Slovenia, while it is mandatory in Greece.
- It is part of an integrated approach to diversity in education in initial teacher training and it is mandatory in Austria, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, while it is optional in the Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, and UK (Wales).
- It is part of the specialised training in special needs education in initial teacher training and it is optional in the Czech Republic and the Netherlands.
- It is a separate subject in in-service teacher training and it is optional in Austria, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, Slovenia, while it is mandatory in Greece.
- It is part of an integrated approach to diversity in education in in-service teacher training and it is optional in Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Lithuania, Portugal, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales), while it is mandatory in Greece.
- It is part of the specialised training in special needs education in in-service teacher training and it is optional in the Czech Republic, Portugal and UK (Scotland).

Q15. Which organisations, groups or individuals are most active in advocating the needs of 'gifted' learners in your country? (Please indicate more than one option if relevant).

*23 countries replied.*

19 countries indicated parents [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, UK (Scotland), Spain, Switzerland, UK (Wales)].

15 countries indicated the organisations for gifted learners [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].

6 countries indicated teachers' organisations [Belgium (French speaking community), Estonia, Lithuania, UK (Scotland), Slovenia, UK (Wales)].

3 countries indicated gifted learners themselves [Finland, Hungary and UK (Scotland)].

16. Are there other approaches and/or debates – other than those described above – in your country concerning 'gifted' learners?

*21 countries replied.*

7 countries reported other approaches [Austria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Lithuania, Slovenia, UK (Scotland)].

14 countries did not report other approaches [Belgium (French speaking community), Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland, UK (Wales)].

16.a. If yes, please describe them briefly below.



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*8 countries replied.*

8 countries reported information about current debates in their countries [Austria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Lithuania, Slovenia, Sweden, UK (Scotland)].

17. Please provide us with information about relevant key people, organisations, research studies or websites addressing issues of 'giftedness' in your country.

*20 countries replied.*

20 countries provided the information concerning key people, organisations, research studies and/or websites addressing the issues of 'giftedness' in their country [Austria, Belgium (French speaking community), Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK (Scotland), UK (Wales)].



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