Special Needs National Frameworks Report

1. Scope

1.1 This document considers the extent to which the partner's countries have systematic provision for monitoring the progress of competence development in learners with special educational needs. It is designed to inform the project about possible ways in which weakest practice can be levelled up to match that of the strongest. We start with the UK because it is apparent that through the P-scales there is a national mandatory system that is not only well-established but proven to be workable on a national scale. This has to be seen in the context of the background framework for Special Needs.

2. UK special needs framework

2. 1 The 1981 Education Act

2.1.1 The current statutory UK national framework for SEN originates with the Education Act 1981. This acknowledged that all children are not the same and despite the advantages of a National Curriculum some individuals require different educational provision tailored to specific needs. The Act introduced the concept of "statements of need" to ‘protect’ the interests of children with Special Needs, and an obligation on local authorities, where statements are maintained, to work in partnership with schools to ensure that the support specified in a statement is provided to an individual child. Under the statutory framework, resources can be distributed on a whole-school basis but there must be arrangements in place to ensure that provision is made for the individual even where the relevant budget is delegated.

2.1.2 Children with special needs are taught both in special schools and in mainstream schools. There is a degree of choice and a lot depended on individual local education authorities as they have a statutory duty to ensure appropriate education for all.

2.2 Funding issues

2.2.1 Funding for Special Needs requires a defining of which pupils have special needs and which do not. The difficulty with this is that Special Needs is a continuum not a clear cut classification. In order to make it possible to provide targeted funding for pupils with SEN the concept of a "statement" was conceived. Statements are statements of the specific needs of individuals that have gone through specific assessments to arrive at a judgement that they should qualify for additional help beyond the mainstream and therefore funding is attached to statements. The assessments used to establish statements is not the same as assessment against the pscales, it is an assessment of specific needs eg disabilities that would make access to learning a problem. That could be a physical disability such as muscular distrophy that had no real effect on cognitive ability. In that case a child with a "statement" might still access qualifications referenced to the main EQF but might need specific physical help to do so. Pscales are more about providing for people with learning disabilities rather than physical or emotional disabilities but of course there is overlap.

2.2.2 In practice, there are a number of ways in which SEN funding is delegated to mainstream schools in the UK. In some Local Authorities it is expected that a proportion of normal school funding (age-weighted pupil units) will be spent on this area. Most Local Authorities have a ‘SEN’ factor in the funding formula that enables them to provide greater funds to schools with high numbers of pupils with SEN. There is also ‘pupil-led’ funding, both for statemented and non-statemented pupils. Funding is a controversial and complex area and it is likely to be an issue in getting a wider spread take up of SEN progress monitoring across Europe.

2.2.3 Delegated funding for SEN was encouraged by the Audit Commission report Statutory

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Assessment and Statements of Special Educational Need: in Need of Review? (June 2002). This report highlighted the inherent tensions created by the statutory framework, stating that ‘statutory assessment is a costly and bureaucratic process, which many parents find stressful and alienating. Statements often provide little assurance to parents, lead to an inequitable distribution of resources and may provide resources to schools in a way that fails to support inclusive practice.’

2.2.4 Ofsted and the Audit Commission have concluded in "LEA Strategy for the Inclusion of Pupils with SEN" that the principal continuing reason for insistence on a statement is lack of confidence, particularly on the part of parents, that without the protection it provides in the form of statutory targeted funding, the provision might cease. This parental lack of confidence is evident from a significant number of ‘failure to educate’ claims brought against local authorities.

2.2.5 In summary, in the UK special needs education funding is strongly linked to the statementing process but this is currently under review in order to streamline administration and unify the assessments currently made by education, health and care professionals in local authorities giving parents and carers of the individual's interests a clear line of accountabilty.

2.3 Special Needs Register and the Code of Practice

2.3.1 Currently 21% of children in the UK are identified as having SEN by their teachers and placed on the Register associated with the "Code of Practice" but only 2.7 per cent have statements. There are two ways of looking at this. One is that teachers have too low expectations of some of their pupils and classify them as having special needs when they are simply at the lower end of the attainment spectrum or because they are simply badly behaved. Another is to say that all children are individuals so all have special needs and the code of practice and the 2.7% is simply prioritising provision and additional funding to those that most need it.

2.3.2 The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (the SEN Code of Practice) paragraph 1.4 defines “special educational needs” as “a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made”. “Learning difficulty” means that the pupil has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of his or her age, and/or has a disability which hinders his or her use of everyday educational facilities. “Special educational provision” means educational provision which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age.

1. Only pupils who have been placed on the SEN school register as required under the SEN Code of Practice should be recorded. A pupil’s placement on the SEN register should occur when he/she is placed on Stage 1 of the Code of Practice.
2. Pupils who are not on the SEN school register but who receive therapeutic or other health-related services from external agencies should not be recorded as having special educational needs.
3. Under-attainment may be an indicator of SEN but poor performance may be due to other school or home based factors such as poor school attendance or adverse family circumstances.
4. As under the SEN Code of Practice (paragraph 2.15) lack of competence in the language used in school must not be equated with, or allowed to mask, learning difficulties as understood in the SEN Code of Practice.
5. A pupil who falls outside the context of the SEN Code of Practice should not be recorded. At the same time, some pupils whose first language is not English may also have learning difficulties, which do lead to special educational needs.
6. A medical diagnosis or disability is not necessarily a special educational need, unless special educational provision is needed to access the curriculum.

2.3.3 The Special Needs register is a way of classifying pupils depending on the severity and priority of their needs without requiring them to be statemented until they get to a particular stage. Stage 1 requires a judgement by the teacher that a pupil has a learning difficulty that needs specific

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attention. They will go on to Stage 2 if progress on Stage 1 is insufficient and they will then have to have an individualised plan to put things right. and so on. Here is a summary of the 5 stages.

- Stage 1 - class teacher identifies difficulty and explores ways of helping
- Stage 2 - school's SEN co-ordinator draws up an education plan
- Stage 3 - external specialists will become involved
- Stage 4 - statutory assessment: detailed assessment of a child's SEN
- Stage 5 - education and Library Board decides whether to issue a statement

Note that issuing a statement is relatively rare since few pupils pass right the way through the stages and this forms a type of triage.

2.4 Criticisms

2.4.1 The main issue is in the arbitrary nature of deciding at what point there is a special need and at what point it is just below average progress. If there is a variation in the population it is inevitable that some will be above average and some below. What about learners with specific needs because they are much brighter than the average? In the end, with the support of current technologies, all pupils could be treated as if they had special needs, matching their education plans to their individual learning needs. Instead of labelling some children as different, some would say it is far better to treat every child as an individual and optimise their learning progress in relation to their potential and their needs. Probably the reason that this approach has not been taken in the past is that individualised learning plans are perceived as

1. **more expensive to support and**
2. **not in the management experience of most mainstream teachers.**

Technology has the potential to overcome 1. but the change of practice required to get teachers effectively supporting individual programmes is likely to take a lot of effort and some time to achieve.

2.5 Pscales and learner certification

The background above is the context in which the Pscales have arisen. Learners with Special Needs, especially those withlearning disabilities were not able to access the mainstream National Curriculum and learning progress measures were impossible to implement. How would a teacher make judgements about which Stage a learner should be placed on the SEN Register if their learning progress could not be measured? The Pscales were therefore designed to provide seamless transition from learning associated with the most profound special needs to the lower levels of the National Curriculum. The innovation that TLM applied was to use the Pscale level criteria which are written in the form of statements of competence as a means of certificating the attainment of Special Needs learners using ECVET principles. A natural extension of this was to use the Pscale structure as a means of under-pinning qualifications that at higher levels reference the European Qualifications Framework. The set of levels that would enable easier access toqualifications referenced to EQF level 1 could then be extended to further sectors. The purpose of this document is to see how the partner country's qualifications frameworks currently relate to the EQF and to providing compatibility with a Pscales approach.

2.6 UK assessment related to the lower levels of the EQF

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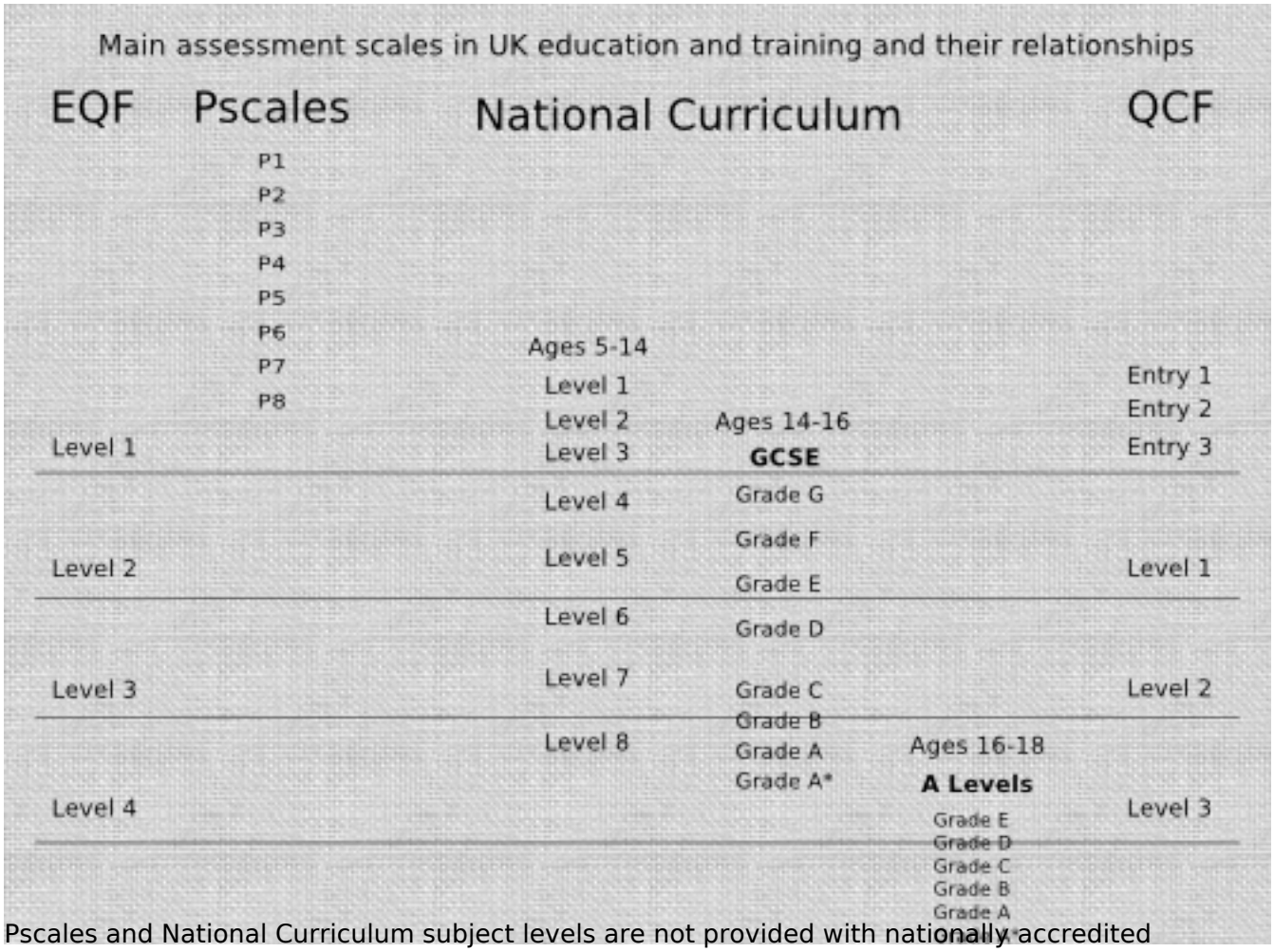
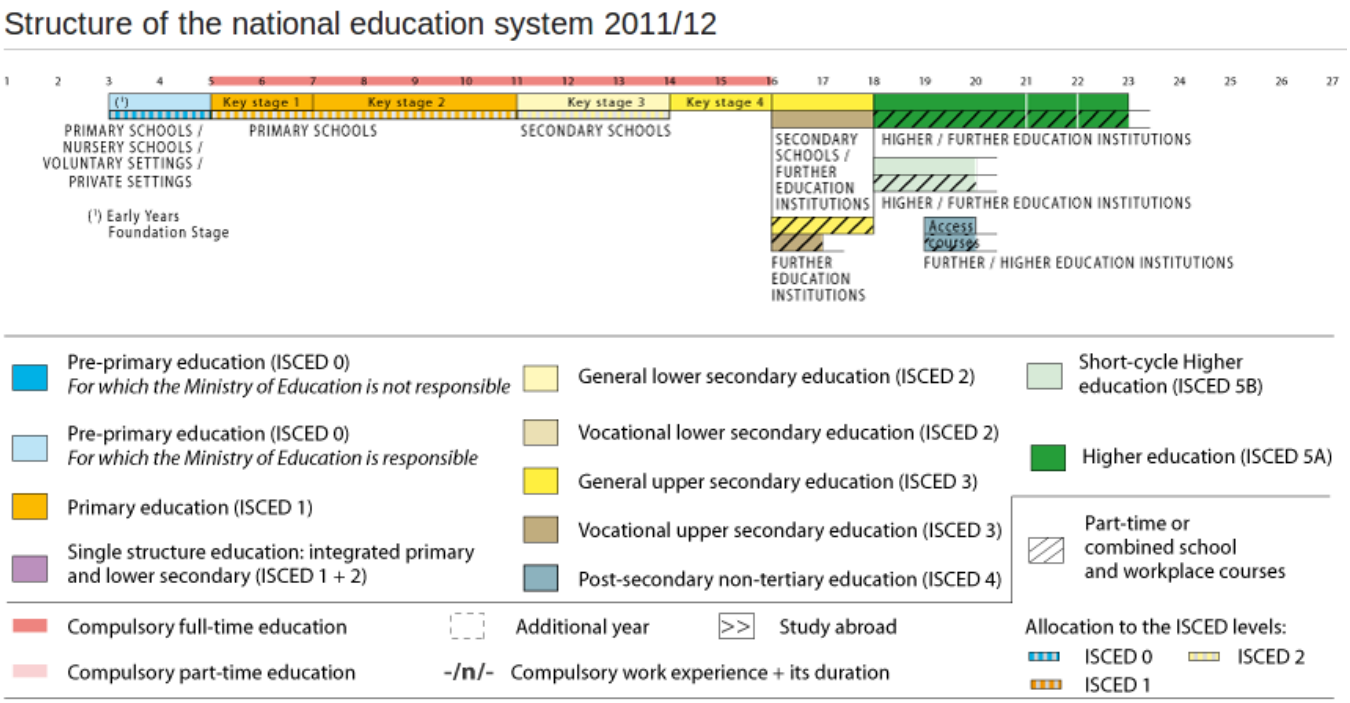


Pscales and National Curriculum subject levels are not provided with nationally accredited certificates, probably because of perceived costs. GCSE is the General Certificate of Secondary Education. A levels are the qualifications generally need for university entrance but some QCF qualifications are also accepted. Some QCF qualifications can be done as replacements for or complementary to GCSEs.

2.7 The UK education system structure



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3. Bulgaria

3.1 The Bulgarian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has just been approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. As P-scales are located below EQF 1, the starting level of the European Qualifications Framework, a proper match needs to be made with the corresponding level(s) of the relevant NQFs. Bulgarian NQF starts at level 0, one level under EQF starting point. This NQF level corresponds to ISCED level 0, reserved to pre-school and preparatory school. The NQF level 0 has the following descriptors:

3.1.1 Knowledge

The learner:

- has initial knowledge of the evironment;
- knows the routine in performing known tasks;
- recognises tools needed for initial education.

3.1.2 Skills

The learner:

- performs simple tasks with understanding;
- expresses, through his creativity, the established initial ideas for the environment;
- uses known materials while performing tasks.

3.1.3 Attitudes

Autonomy and responsibility:

The learner:

- participates actively in simple, known activities;
- can perform tasks under guidance from an adult;
- knows the consequences of his own actions.

Communication and social competences:

The learner:

- understands and passes on short, simple information in oral form;
- works in a group demonstrating tolerance to other children in the group;
- begins to express his autonomy as a new social role.

3.2 Context and Legislation

Current status of the SEN subject matter in Bulgaria is largely a result of actions in response to the **Salamanca Declaration**(1994). Bulgaria is also a party to the **Florence Agreement** (1950; BG accession 1997) which is referenced in the Salamanca document, and to the UN **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1989, BG accession 1991).

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Internal legislation has been continuously updated and as of **2006** fully corresponds to abovementioned framework and policy documents related to SEN. As during the accession to EU legislation was harmonised, there is also full correspondence to the *acquis*. Last changes define the statute and role of various institutions, specialised schools, integrated schools, teachers responsible for SEN, resource centers. Integrated education of pupils with SEN has been implemented **since 2002**. A national framework document is in place - **National plan for integration of children with SEN and/or chronic diseases in the system of public ediucation**.

Important definitions in internal legislation

Children with SEN are those who experience different type of difficulties in their education, due to:

- sensory damage (impaired vision or hearing);
- physical disability;
- mental retardation;
- language-speech disorders;
- specific education/learning difficulties;
- emotional and/or behavioral problems;
- communication disorders;
- chronic diseases leading to SEN;
- multiple damage/disabilities.

Integrated education

Integrated education of children with SEN is such an education where the child, irrespective of the type of damage/disease is included in the mainstream education environment (general schools). This is achieved through constructing and functioning of a supportive environment, including appropriate architectural and social conditions, individual education programs, teams of experts, special technical means and apparel, didactic materials and tools.

Note: **Integration policies** as a term is used in BG simultaneously and as equivalent to **inclusion policies**.

Principles of integrated education (as laid out by the National plan for integration of children with SEN and/or chronic diseases in the system of public ediucation):

- each child has the right of equal access to education;
- each child is a unique personality with its traits, interests, abilities and education needs;
- each child with special education needs has the right of access to mainstream kindergartens and schools which must provide education focused on the child and his/her needs;

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- **each child with SEN has the right to be educated based on individual education programmes (or individual learning plans), commensurate with his/her abilities and needs;**
- mainstream kindergartens and schools with integrated children with SEN create a tolerant society and achieve education for all.

3.3 Institutions engaged in SEN integration in education

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Science
- Regional inspectorates of education
- Regional resource centers for support of integrated education of children and pupils with SEN
- Kindergartens and schools

Also involved in the process:

- Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (through Agency for People with Disabilities)
- Ministry of Health
- State Agency for Child Protection
- Social Assistance Agency
- Regional and municipal authorities
- large number of NGOs, day centers, etc.

3.4 Studies and Findings

A very detailed study was prepared in 2007 by the Center for Economic Development (BG), commissioned by Save the Children (UK). Summary of main conclusions:

- The numbers of children with SEN in he mainstream system is increasing.
- Many children with SEN are still kept away from the mainstream education system by being directed to specialized schools where education is, by general consensus, substandard.
- Mainstream schools lack the competencies and resources (such as specialized and psychological help available, safe environment (material), motivation of staff) to deal with SEN and tend to discriminate.
- Numbers show that slightly less than 20% of all children with SEN had been assessed in terms of what their particular educational needs are.
- Mainstream education is not necessarily good for all children with SEN (see above). Parents often tend to have very high expectations which are not always correlated to their children's SEN.
- Lack of contemporary training materials for children with SEN (outdated and boring content).

3.5 SEN in numbers*

- Total number of specialised schools - 80, 50 of which for children with mental retardedness, 4 for impaired hearing, 2 for impaired vision.
- Number of children in special SEN kindergartens: 876.
- Number of children in special SEN schools (mental retardedness): 483
- Number of children in special SEN schools (hospital and rehabilitation schools): 242
- Total number of children in specialised SEN schools: 4996 (down from 6651 in 2008/2009)
- Total number of children with SEN in integrated schools or in care of a resource center: 10359

* All data current as of 2011/2012 school year unless otherwise indicated.

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3.6 General conclusions

1. The number of children with SEN in specialised institutions is declining fast. Taking 2008/2009 school year as base, the reduction is from 6651 to 4996, or just under 25%. This reflects the move to integrated education and inclusion of more SEN pupils in mainstream schools. As the number of specialised SEN education institutions remains unchanged in the last few years and with the declared policy of promoting inclusion, one would expect that, with reduction in number of children, at least some move toward effiiciency is made in reforming these specialised institutions. Moving children out means that, according to the principle of "money follow the pupil", these specialised institutions are even more under-financed. As the number of integrated SEN pupils can never be zero, policy-makers should demonstrate clear vision of reforms in a sector which has been dominated for over a decade by the slogan "let's take the SEN kids out of special schools and into mainstream schools".

2. Although the NQF Level 0 descriptors (see above) can be traced to P-scales descriptors, it is clear that all

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8 levels of P-scales need to be accommodated in one "bottomless" NQF level. Clearly this loses the fine resolution of the Pscales needed to track progress accurately in the sort of detail supported by the UK system in special schools. This can be solved by using the certification model interface and tools for recording achievements and marking clear progression routes for individual SEN learners (e.g. we can record learner's performance and achievements as 10% NQF level 0, 25% NQF level 0, etc., eventually reaching 100% NQF level 0 and heading towards NQF/EQF level 1). This is supported by the on-line progress tracking facilities that have been developed as part of the project beyond the original specification. This response to user needs has made it very much more likely that the certification can be sustained in Bulgaria and it has been well recieved by MEP Dr Kovatchev.

3. Current data indicates that about half of the learners with registered SEN (approx 5,000) are in integrated schools, while regional resource centers work with approx 11,000 children. Regional resource centers appear to be the right ally in promoting SAFE and P-scale model.

3.7 Graphs

The diagram below contains graphs clarifying the Bulgarian education and training system, and demonstrating the correspondence between the relevant qualification levels.

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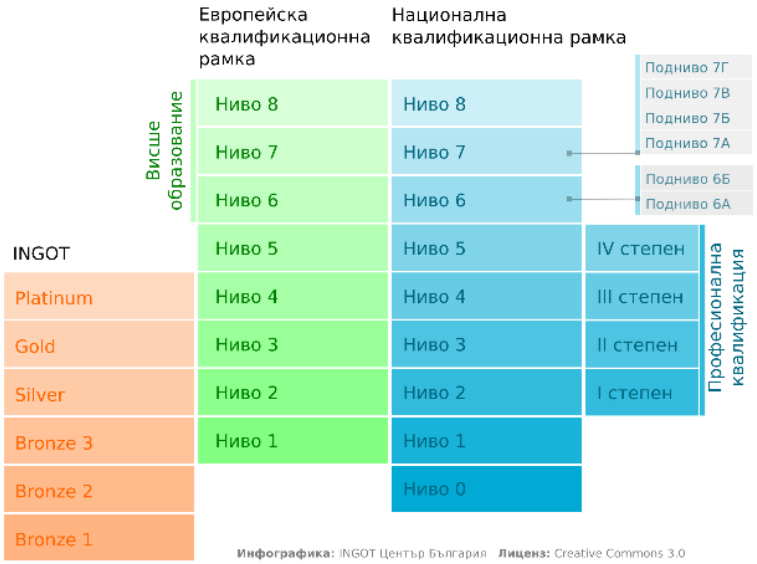
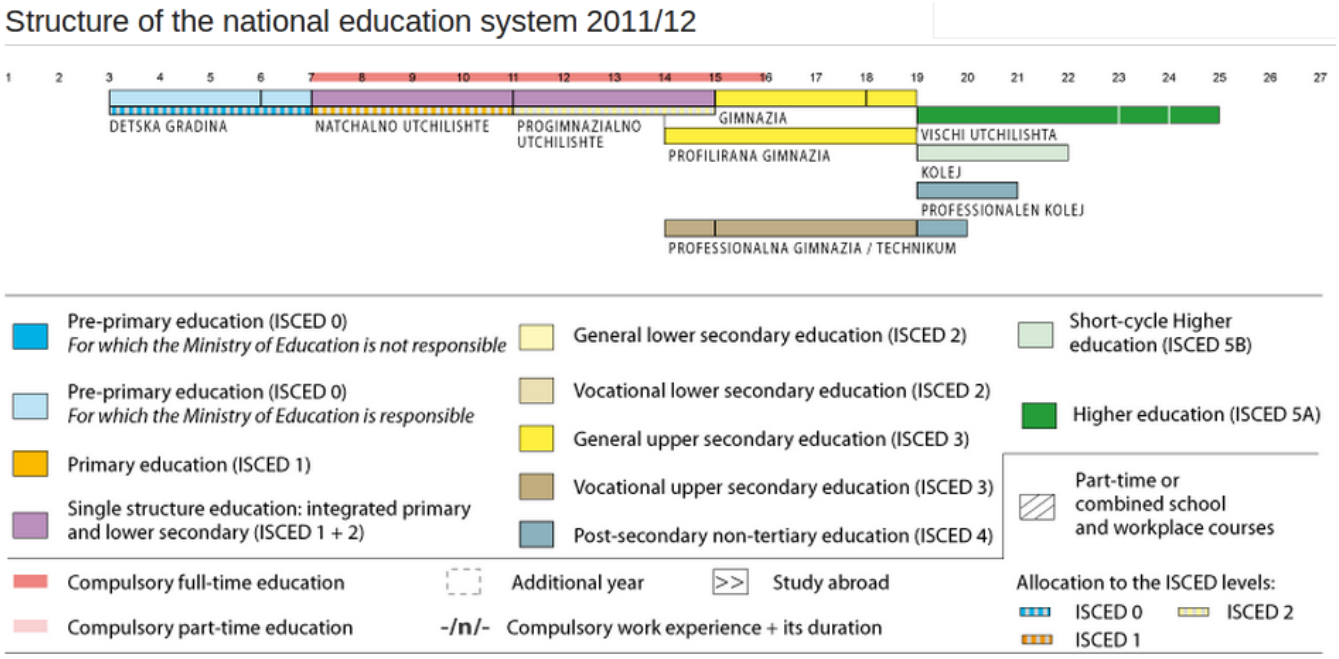
Graphical representation of Bulgarian NQF, EQF and INGOT levels

Source: INGOT Centre Bulgaria. http://ingot.adamsmith.bg

The graph contains, from left to right, INGOT qualification levels, EQF levels (including EHEA cycles 1-3 at EQF levels 6-8), Bulgarian NQF (expanded for HE levels and sub-levels) and Bulgarian VET system (levels 1-4 at EQF 2-5).



The next diagram provides a representation of the Bulgarian education and training system



4. Czech Republic

4.1 The changing context in the Czech Republic

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4.1.1 The Czech Republic education system is under-going a total transformation. There is considerable volatility in the political direction and the views of implementation of educational change. The rapid rotation of many different experts to ministerial positions, and the conflicts in their views and ideas, is indicative of the background context for the project in the Czech Republic. New changes are announced on an almost daily basis, with some simple expressions of initiation and others full development plans.

4.1.2 From 1 January 2005 a new Education Law came into force (Law 561/2004, related to pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational and other training) with some revolutionary changes making compulsory education more inclusive and extending it to all children, even those with the most profound disabilities. New school regulations have also come into play concerning integration and inclusion. Integration and inclusion are concepts which have been employed in Western Europe since the 1970's, (Tutte, 2006) but only since the 1990s in the Czech Republic and there is still ground to be made up.

4.1.3 At the beginning of the 1990s, the number of variously disabled children in special schools was 71,972 and this number stayed about the same until 1998. Most were children with learning disabilities previously referred to as being "mentally retarded". The following year the number of pupils in special schools dropped to 70 418 and since then we observe a sharp decrease, which in 2005 stopped at 65,397. This has largely been a result of the successful work with disabled children and their integration into mainstream schools.

4.2 The nature of Special Needs in the Czech Republic

4.2.1 Children with SEN are those with handicaps such as:

- Chronic disabilities (including long term illnesses)
- Physical defects and other health defects

4.2.2 For these students with physical disabilities it is more difficult to work with stationery, move around the classroom, and participate in activities that require any physical activity. The cause of their disabilies is disease, accidents and congenital malformations and these can have a wide range of effects on learning from lack of energy and vigour to distratedness and difficulties in concentration.

4.3 Specific issues include:

4.3.1 Blindness and deafness

These students have hearing, visual defects, complete loss of the senses or reduced capacity in these senses. Individualised support is provided in those cases where the child can't see or hear well enough to participate in the way their peers do in mainstream lessons.

4.3.2 Learning disabilities

The work of these children is limited by mental capacity that is significantly lower than in the mainstream. The difficulty is in deciding where to make this diagnosis when there is a continuum and not all such cases are directly attributable to a defined condition such as Downs Syndrome. In most cases such children under-perform in all aspects of the curriculum compared to their peers.

4.3.3 Speech problems

The basic issue here is in reduced ability to speak clearly or in extreme cases at all. This is comonly caused by impaired hearing but it might not be. For example stammering or a physical problem with jaw or larynx could be responsible.

4.3.4 Specific Learning Disorders

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These include, Dyslexia - reduced ability to read that is inconsistent with other abilities, Dysgrafia – reduced ability to write that is inconsistent with other abilities, Dysortografie – reduced ability to spell correctly that is inconsistent with other abilities, Dyscalculia – reduced ability in mathematical skills inconsistent with other abilities, non – verbal learning disorders are disorder that affect learnig outside speaking, listening, reading and writing.

4.3.5 Emotional and Behavioural Disorders

These usually manifest themselves in forms of anti-social behaviour beyond what is normally considered occasional naughtiness. Casues can be deprived social contexts and upbringing but there can be physical and mental causes too.

4.3.6 Autism Specrum Disorders

These are disorders of neural development characterised by impaired social interaction and communication, and by restricted and repetitive behaviour. The signs all begin before a child is three years old. Autism affects information processing in the brain by altering how nerve cells and their synapses connect and organize; how this occurs is not well understood. It is one of three recognized disorders in the autism spectrum (ASDs), the other two being Asperger syndrome, which does not include delays in cognitive development and language, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified (commonly abbreviated as PDD-NOS), which is diagnosed when the full set of criteria for autism or Asperger syndrome are not met.

4.3.7 Diagnosis and assessment of special needs

Special education programmes are provided for those children whose special needs are discovered through pedagogic, psychological or medical assessments. The initiators in the process are usually parents of the children or teachers in school. The extent and relevancy of the need is the main reason for putting the children into a special education regime.

4.3.8 Special educational needs provision

SEN provision is through individual integration or as a group or school integration separately for pupils with special educational needs. Training individually integrated pupil is made according to individual educational program. The structure and elements of an individual educational program can be expanded according to individual student needs.

4.3.9 Individual student integration means

1. Their education is supported in the classrooms of nursery, primary, secondary or vocational high schools which are not separately identified for pupils with special educational needs.
2. Group integration means a pupil in a special education class or special class established under special laws.

There is a specific rule in the Czech Republic for children with dyslexia. Such pupils can get additional time for their examinations if they have an acknowledgment from a pedagogical – psychological centre, confirming that the child has been attending sessions with a specialist who is helping to integrate with the general school system as far as possible.

4.3.10 Institutions involved in SEN education

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
- Regional Pedagogical – psychological centres
- Pre-schools and schools

4.3.11 Special Schools

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- Special schools are a part of the overall educational system but the number of them is decreasing due to a policy of integration. These schools provide education to pupils with mental, sensory or physical disabilities, pupils with communication difficulties, pupils with complex needs, pupils with learning and/or behavioural difficulties. Pupils who are ill or pupils with a health risk are temporarily placed in hospitals and/or other health care institutions and can attend schools in these institutions.

- Special schools offer education for pre-school children, for pupils at the age of compulsory school attendance and at upper secondary level, including vocational schools. They mostly serve children whose special needs that can not be met in mainstream settings and for those pupils whose parents prefer this kind of placement.

4.3.12 Curriculum issues

- The aim of special education is to provide education, tailored according to the needs of the pupil and which supports the pupils' social inclusion.

- All pupils follow the national school curriculum. Pupils with learning disabilities follow a reduced school curriculum.

- There is no specific assessment framework like the pscales to monitor progress of learners with special needs or facilities for certificating their achievements at the same levels.

4.3.13 Some of the currently applicable legislation and regulations in the Czech Republic for integration / inclusion

- The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms
- The National Plan for Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
- Decree No 72/2005 Coll. the provision of consulting services in schools and school facilities (Vyhláška č. 72/2005 Sb. o poskytování poradenských služeb ve školách a školských zařízeních)
- Decree No. 73/2005 Coll. the education of children, pupils and students with special educational needs gifted children, pupils and students (Vyhláška č. 73/2005 Sb. o vzdělávání dětí, žáků a studentů se speciálními vzdělávacími potřebami a dětí, žáků a studentů mimořádně nadaných)
- Act No. 561/2004 Coll. preschool, primary, secondary, vocational and other education (Education Act) Zákon č. 561/2004 Sb. o předškolním, základním, středním, vyšším odborném a jiném vzdělávání (školský zákon)

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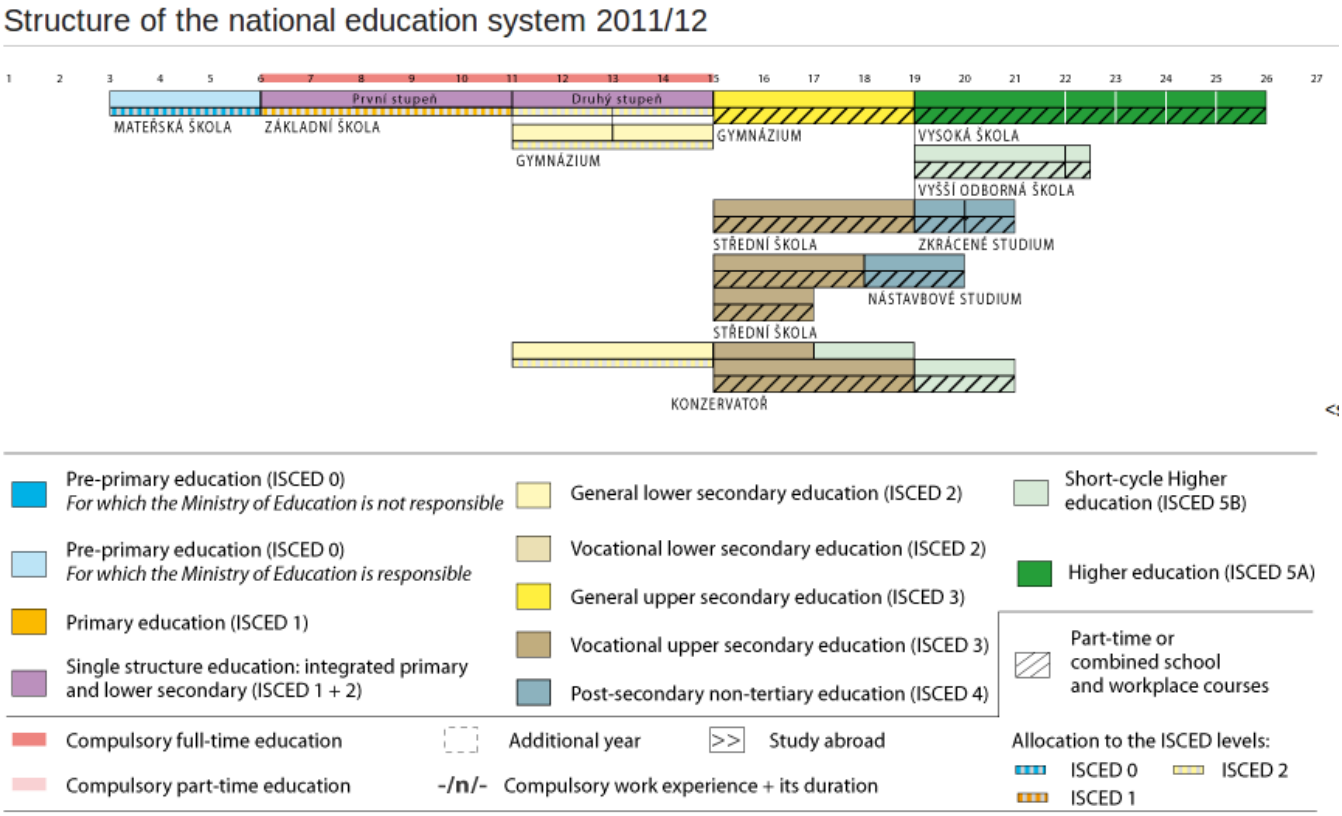

5. Germany

5.1 Qualifications in Germany

5.1.1 As in many other EU-countries, the integration of a generic NQF (national qualifications framework; in Germany it is called DQR Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen or German Qualifications Framework) referenced to EQF is in progress. This initiative and the integration of SEN pupils is considerably more difficult than in other european countries due to the fact that in Germany there are 16 local authorities (so-called Länder) which each have to decide on the matter and their decisions are largely independent. A DQR has been in development in Germany since 2006. It will include qualifications obtained in general education, higher education and vocational education and training. A first proposal was published in 2009 (see also the website: http://www.deutscherqualifikationsrahmen.de/ [1]) as a result of the co-operation numerous stakeholders in the educational sector.

5.1.2 The overall aim of this initiative is to create a new brand „Educated in Germany“ with clear reference to the EQF. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (German abbreviation: BMBF1) jointly with the Standing Conference of the Education Ministries of the German Länder (German abbreviation: KMK2) have clearly stated that there are no comments on the EQF referencing process in Germany before conclusions are drawn from the results of testing of the proposed set of the DQR descriptors.

5.1.3 Status quo: In December 2005 Germany announced the development of a German Qualifications Framework in the context of the EQF consultation. In October 2006 the BMBF and the KMK agreed to develop a German Qualifications Framework. In June 2007 the BMBF and the KMK established a Coordination Group for the DQR (German abbreviation: B-L-KG DQR), which manages the process of drawing up the DQR. This process involves a large number of stakeholders (about 30) from general education, higher education and vocational education and training, the social partners and experts from research and practice. Together with the B-L-KG DQR these stakeholders form the “National Working Group on the DQR” (German abbreviation: AK DQR). On behalf of the BMBF a DQR Büro (DQR Office) has been set up to provide technical and administrative support to the process. In spring 2008 the stakeholders agreed on essentials of a DQR.

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(Source: taken from the EQF-Ref Wp3: EQF Referencing Process – Exchange of Experience German Case Study; meeting proceedings Nov-2011; for further informationsee http://www.deutscherqualifikationsrahmen.de/de/der_dqr/stand_der_umsetzung/ [2]) 2011: the final report is available.

5.1.4 In a meeting held on 10 November 2010, it was finally agreed on a draft DQR which was submitted to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and to the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK).

5.2 DQR, P-Scales and inclusion

5.2.1 The overall national German educational system is not very transparent and clear when compared to the 16 educational systems in the Länder. In each country, you will find an integrative or even inclusive educational system allowing SEN pupils to become integrated into regular schools. A competence based reference for SEN which might be referenced to EQF doesn't exist. While pupils are assessed for special needs, there is no universal systematic method for tracking their learning progress in the style of the Pscales.

5.2.2 A very intensive discussion is ongoing due to the fact that the UN convention (2010) for inclusion is mandatory for Germany. The UN-convention was a starting point for many projects in the Länder. In addition, in the vocational educational sector, there is a discussion about the best way to achieve a smoother integration of SEN into worklife. Despite all of the work done so far, in general, a SEN pupil still faces significant difficulties when it comes to efficient and effective integration into a regular school. The Pscales can make a difference but it is such a new concept for most teachers it is taking quite some effort to simply to raise awareness at this stage.

5.2.3 As for SEN in general and SEN in vocational education, the situation is improving due to a common agreement of the Länder. All Länder have agreed to accept a joint definition of SEN. Due to the different situations and legal status of SEN in the Länder, this joint definition makes the system more accessible for SEN pupils. There is still a clear distinction between SEN and non-SEN (so regular) educational schools. Today, SEN in the sense of „Sonderschule“ is disappearing in Germany in favour of a differentiated SEN school system that means educational instruction, assistance, therapy, new diagnostic approaches are better targeted on individual needs.

5.2.4 Summary

There is no link between EQF/NQF/Germany DQR and SEN. It is assumed that qualifications and frameworks are for higher levels of employment than is normally available to many SEN learners. While there are clear implications related to equality and social inclusion in this, we are only just beginning to see sufficient awareness to understand the issue. The implications for the Pscale project are as follows:

1. More time will be needed in awareness raising than initially envisaged
2. Political support is likely to be needed to effect the policy change needed for mass take up
3. It is essential that training and support is sustained until the time required to get widespread acceptance has elapsed

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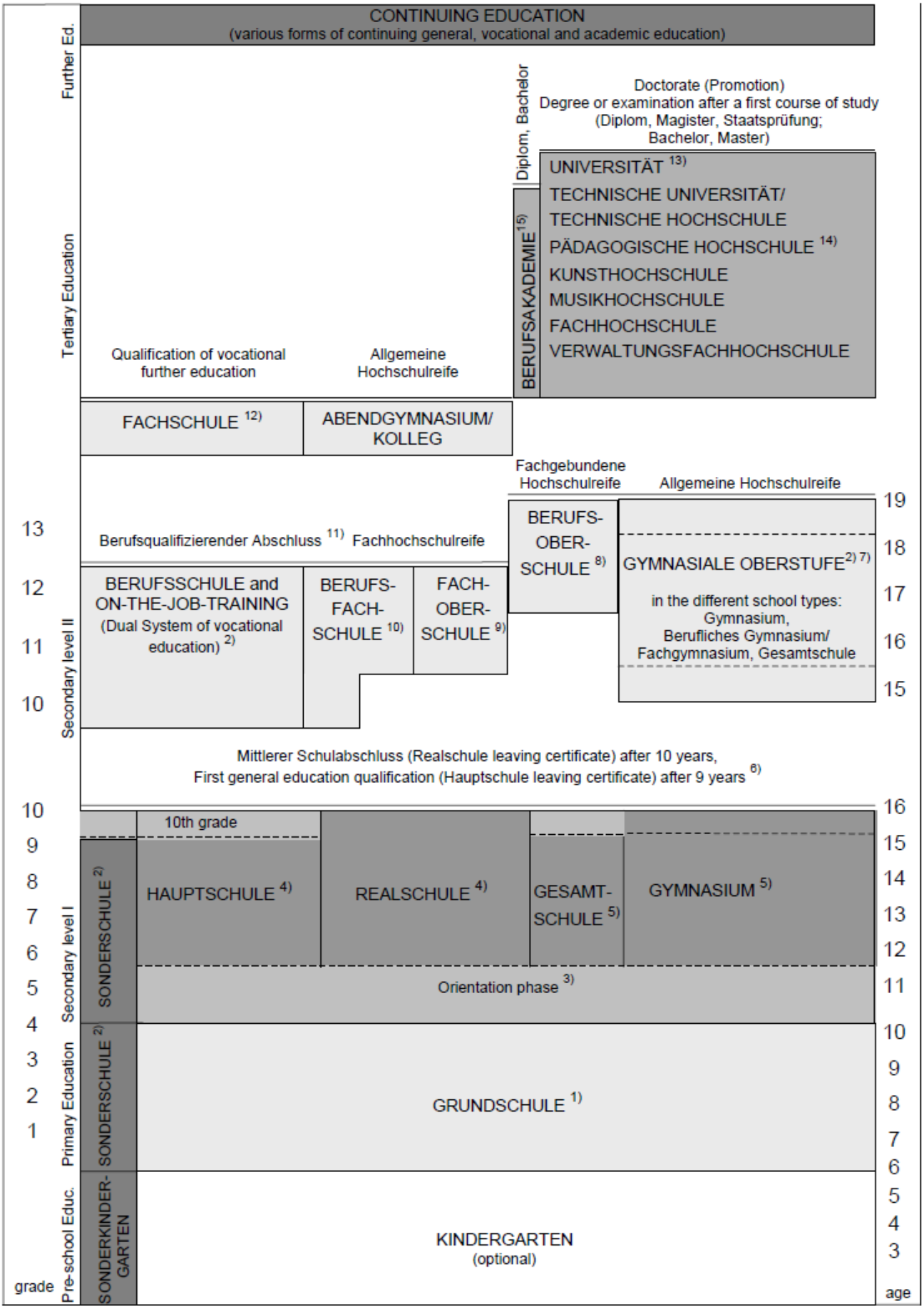
Basic Structure of the Educational System in the Federal Republic of Germany



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6. Romania

6.1 Integration of SEN in the Romanian Educational System

6.1.1 In Romania, Government produced legislative documents in accordance with international key documents on education related to children with special needs. This legislation has been in action since the mid-90s. The intention is that all Romanian citizens have equal right to education at all levels and forms, regardeless of gender, race, nationality, religion or political affiliation and regardless of social and economic status. This right is provided in education law no 84/ 1995 and is broadly consistent with all other EU member states' policies for equality and inclusion.

6.1.2 Public school education is free and the State gurantees the right to education in the interest of the individual and society. Special education is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. It is part of the Romanian educational system and offers to all children educational programs suited to their needs and stage of development. Special education is the responsibility of all the employees of a school and is flexible and comprehensive.

6.1.3 In Romania, children with disabilities have access to various forms of education and can be enrolled, according to the degree of disability. There is a special education system for some cases but many can be integrated in mainstream education. Children with moderate disabilities, learning difficulties and language disorders, with socio-emotional or behaviour disorders are integrated into mainstream schools where they can receive educational support services. Special education is organised by the type of disability: mental, hearing, sight, movement and other associated disabilities. The Commission for Child Protection, institution subordinated to county councils, is the agency used to identify the type of deficiency and its degree.

6.1.4 Children needing special education can access the curriculum of mainstream schools with the curriculum adapted to suit their needs, or they can attend special schools. The duration of schooling can be different depending on the disabilities in question. For example, for children with severe mental
deficiency, the duration of schooling in the primary and secondary can be 9-10 years, which means that is 1-2 years longer than the 8 years from the mainstream education.

6.1.5 Children with special educational needs have access to pedagogical resources in school for rehabilitation and recovery – medical and social- and other types of intervention services. These services are also available in the community or specialised institutions, including those providing special education. Special education is organized at all levels of school education, including kindergartens, elementary schools (grades I-VIII, primary and gymnasium), arts and crafts schools, colleges, post-secondary schools, educational centers, day care centers curative pedagogical centers. In some cases, schools covers several levels of education in the same institution of special education. Education of children with special needs is organized in groups or in special classes and in some cases, individually. The groups or the classes from special schools are usually smaller in number that those in mainstream schools. Some schools provide special education and instruction in mother tongue.

6.1.6 Currently, there are 2 approaches that address the aspecial education issue in Romania

- the individual perpective on child.
- the curricular perpective.

6.1.7 In Romanian educational system, the integration of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools can be achived in two ket ways

- compact classes, groups of 3 – 4 children.
- individual children with SEN integrated in mainstream schools.

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The most comonly used form of integration is the individual integrated in normal classes in mainstream schools with the SEN child living at home.

6.1.8 The organization of special education is similar with the ordinary education but there are some specific differences in some circumstances. Special education is organised according to the type and degree of disability, special schools are only normally used for children with severe or profound learninbg disabilities and in some situations, children with moderate disabilities. All other children are integrated into regular education.

6.1.9 Children with sensory or motor disabilities can benefit from special school provision but follow the curriculum of mainstream schools. The difference between these schools and mainstream schools is the physical and methodological accessibility specific to physical disabilities. In special schools there are 3 types of mandatory activities:

- teaching – learning activities conducted by special education teachers, in the morning,
- specific rehabilitation therapies, conducetd by psihopedagog teachers and therapists
- educational activities carried out by educators, in the afternoon.

6.1.10 The number of students in a class is dependent on the degree of deficiency: 8-12 children with moderate deficiencies and 4-6 for children with severe deficiencies. There are situations where there are groups with less than 4 students for children with profound and associated disabilities. The graduates of special schools can participate in national assessment together with the students of the mainstream schools but have additional rights in order to prevent their disabilities unfairly disadvantaging them. For example, they can be given additional time, bigger fonts which can be viewd by visual impaired children, or the possibility to write in braille.

6.1.11 Arts and crafts schools have a curriculum close to the curriculum of mainstream schools. The specialist qualifications they provide are obtained in the same way as with regular education. For students with sensory and motor deficiency there are high schools and colleges where they can continue
their studies if their access to higher education is limited by problems getting to the baccalaureate exam.

6.1.12 There is no systematic national provision like the Pscales for tracking progress of children with learning disabilities. Neither is there routine use of IT in the assessment management process. These issues present a significant challenge in achieving rapid large scale take up but there is interest when teachers understand the potential for supporting improved progress and self-esteem. Any inclusion policy needs to recognise achievements from all sections of the population, not necessarily only those that can attain a place in higher education or employment. For this reason it is important for the Pscale project to keep a high profile in Romania and raise further awareness even if full implementation and take up takes some time.

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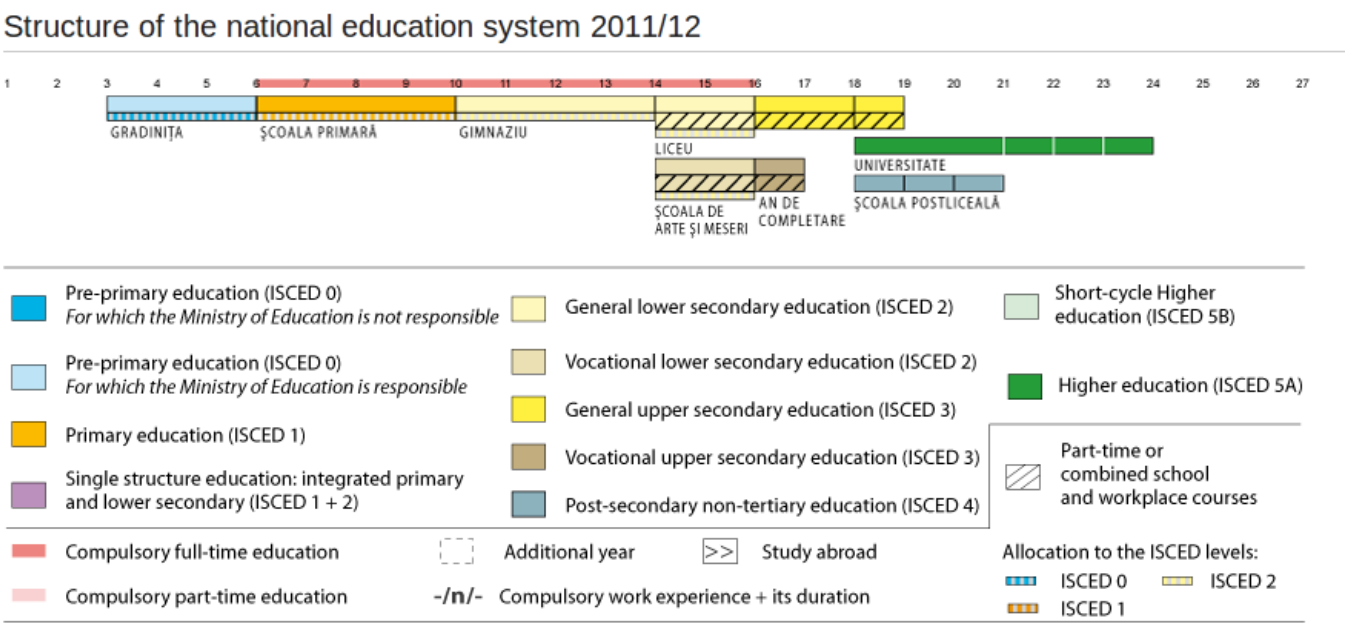

7. Netherlands

7.1 Overview of th eeducation system

7.1.1 Overall responsibility for the public-private education system lies with the State. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is headed by the minister of education, culture and science A State Secretary (junior minister) of Education, culture and Science is appointed.

7.1.2 The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science lays down conditions for early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education. The provinces have a limited role to play when it comes to managing education and its content. They are required to perform supervisory and jurisdictional duties. The administration and management of schools of primary and secondary general and vocational education is locally organized.

7.1.3 Since 1 January 1998 all adult and vocational education institutions have been incorporated in regional training centres (ROCs). The Government lays down a framework within which higher education (HBO) institutions have to operate, but it is the responsibility of the competent authority to expand on the Government framework within the teaching and examination regulations.

7.1.4 Since 1991 policy has been geared to integrating children with special needs in mainstream primary schools, under the motto "Going to School Together" (WSNS). The aim of this policy is:

- to enable pupils with special needs to attend mainstream primary schools;
- to control costs by awarding a set budget to consortia of mainstream schools and special schools for primary education, from which the latter schools and special facilities at mainstream primary schools are funded;
- to broaden and strengthen special needs facilities at primary schools 'basisscholen' so that more pupils with special needs can remain in mainstream education and all pupils receive the support they need, at the same time helping to eliminate waiting lists for admission to special schools for primary education.

7.1.5 Pscales and the curriculum

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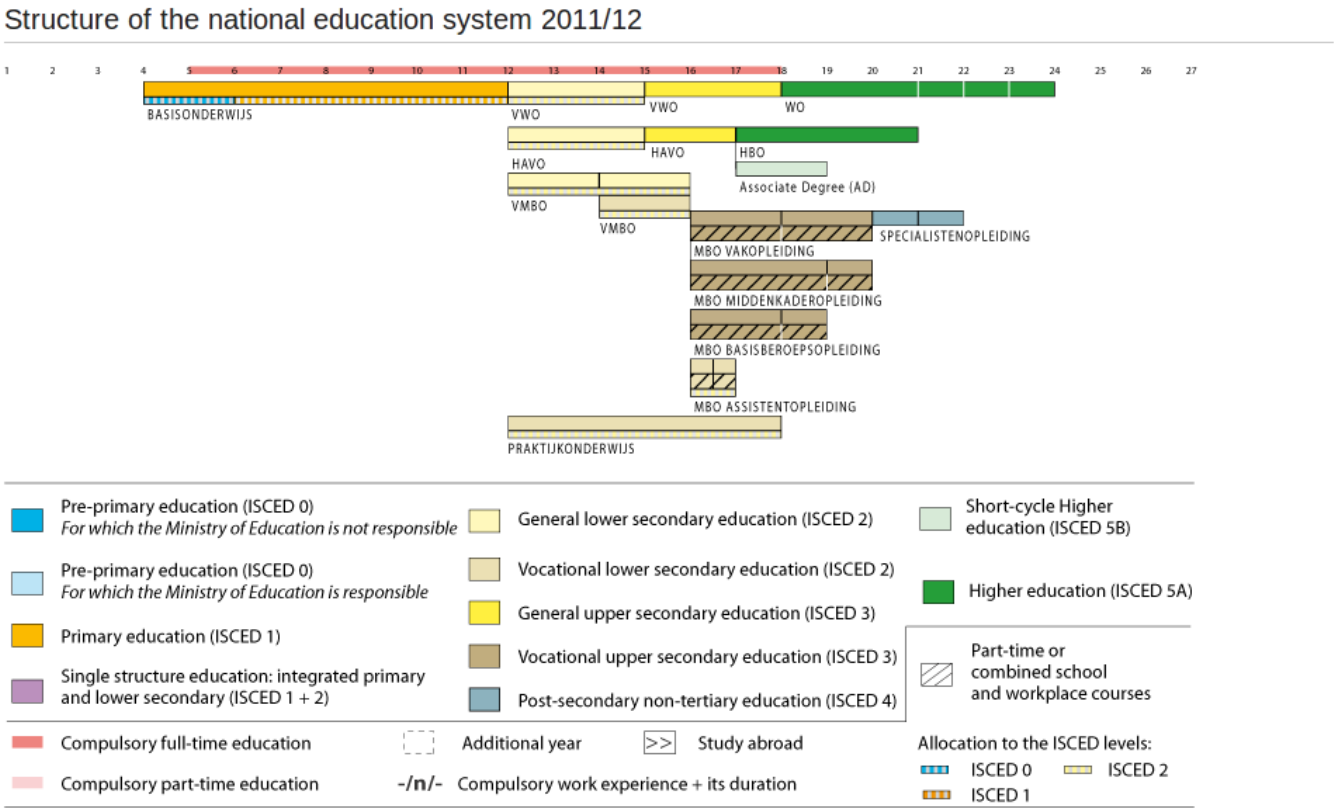
There is currently no systematic national method for monitoring progress of learners who can not access the mainstream curriculum. Pscales are a new concept in the Netherlands and the use of IT systems to enable management of this type of assessment is not evident. There is considerable interest generated in vocational occupational support but this will require extension of the assessment criteria to cover popular occupational areas for those with special needs related to learning disabilities. The raising of awareness of the issues in the SAFE project needs to be continued even though sustainability is more likely in the short term by applying the methods to provide certification of those in Sheltered Workshops rather than mainstream and special schools. To gain significant traction for Pscales in the school system will need political backing. The contacts with MEPs have the potential to provide this but as with any innovation there is risk that the necessary support will not be forthcoming.



8. Spain

8.1 Development of National Qualifications Framework

8.1.1 Spain has started on the road towards an overarching NQF. However, current work is concentrated on separate frameworks for higher education (related to EHEA) and for VET. Once these two frameworks are developed and once it is finished, the remaining educational levels will be added.

8.1.2 Levels

Spain has a 5-level structure in VET and a 3 level structure for higher education. The links between these have yet to be defined.

8.1.3 Descriptors/ Use of learning outcomes

The standards that characterise the 5 VET-levels have been written in terms of learning outcomes and are defined taking into account professional competences demanded by employment sectors using criteria such as knowledge, initiative, autonomy, responsibility and complexity.

8.1.4 Legal base

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The legal basis for the work with NQF has been established through the 2002 Law on "Qualifications and Vocational Training" and the 2006 Law on "Education".

8.1.5 National Coordination point

Directorate General for Academic Organisation and Evaluation is the National coordination point for Spain.

8.2 Special needs education

8.2.1 The educational system will arrange the necessary resources in order for pupils with temporary or permanent special educational needs to achieve the objectives established within the general programme for all pupils. The public administrations give pupils the necessary support from the beginning of their schooling or as soon as they are diagnosed as having special needs. School teaching is adapted to these pupils' needs. The schools develop the curriculum through didactic plans, which have to take into account the pupils' needs and characteristics. They also develop an Educational Project, where the objectives and the educational priorities are fixed along with the implementation procedures. In order to prepare this project, they consider the school characteristics, its environment, and the pupils' educational needs.

8.2.2 Pupils are schooled in accordance with their characteristics, either integrating them in mainstream groups, in specialised classrooms within mainstream schools, or in special schools, depending on the form determined by the professional teams, taking into account their parents' and teachers' opinions. Successive developments by each educational establishment and group enables many possibilities for adjusting to pupils's needs. When studies become progressively more complex, there will be certain pupils who for a range of different reasons, find it more difficult to reach the objectives and contents laid down in the mainstream curriculum. These pupils will consequently be in need of another type of more specific adjustments.

8.2.3 Once ordinary measures of attention to diversity have been applied and have proved to be insufficient to respond to the educational needs of an individual pupil, the education system considers a series of extraordinary measures. These are:

- repeating a cycle or school year,
- significant curricular adaptations,
- support measures for pupils with special educational needs,
- curricular diversification
- as a last resort, Social Guarantee Programmes.

8.2.4 Curricular adaptations are made to suit individual needs. When the student body shows itself to have educational needs which in view of their permanent nature, source or the type require modification of central features of the curriculum, significant curricular adaptations may be carried out. The application of these extraordinary measures signifies the modification of content, objectives and assessment criteria of the mainstream curriculum. The necessary point of departure for such a measure is a previous psycho-pedagogical assessment (performed by the specialised guidance services) and an ongoing follow-up that allows the pupil to access the standardised curriculum whenever possible.

8.3 Pscales and progression

8.3.1 It is clear from the current situation that tracking progress using the Pscales would be of benefit in bringing a consistent framework to support progression from levels below the mainstream currriculum to meet it. For those that will never manage this transition Pscales provide a means of recognising progress and achivement in order to include such learners in a general facet of society, namely, gaining formal recognition for their learning.

8.3.2 The main barrier to take up is that the concept of Pscales and the use of the supporting technology are unknown and outside the normal working methods of teachers. While a number of

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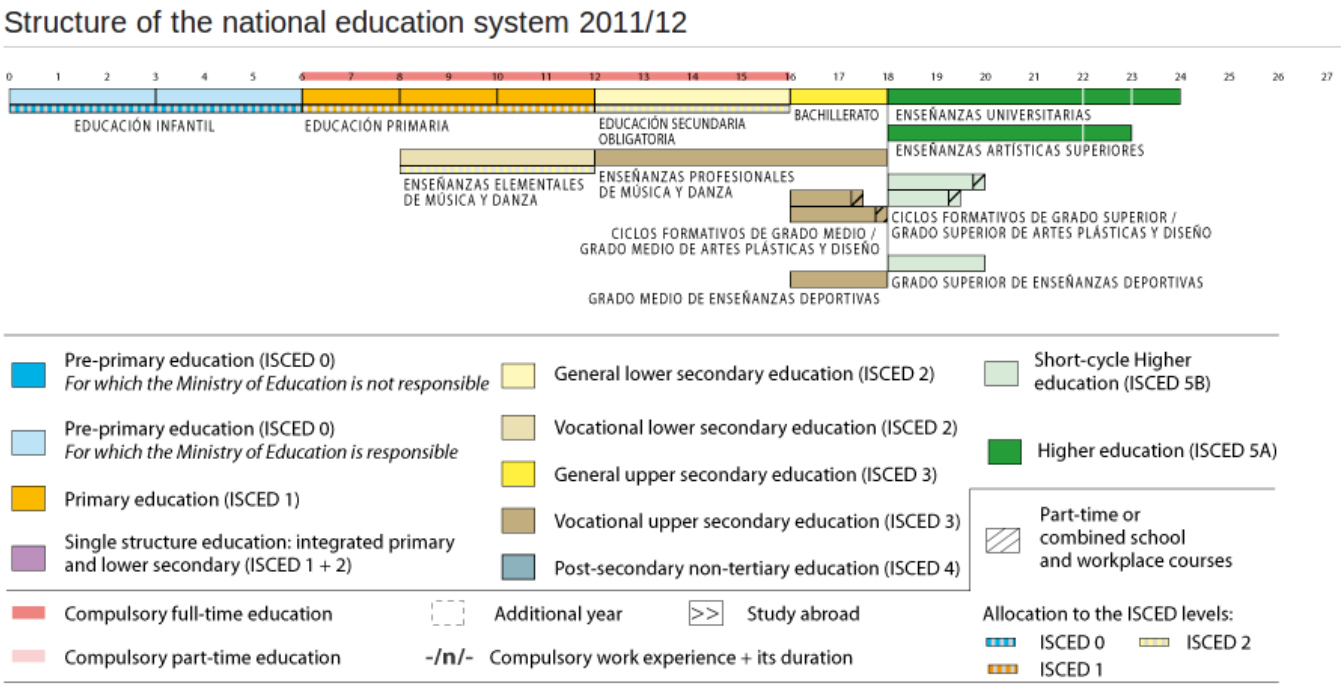
teachers are suportive of the concept it is likely that political backing and considerable effort and training resources will be required to get mass take up.



ANNEXE 1 - Classification of types of Special Educational Need

1. Cognitive and Learning

(a) Dyslexia/SpLD (DYL)
(b) Dyscalculia (DYC)
(c) Dyspraxia/DCD (DCD
(d) Mild Learning Difficulties (MILD)
(e) Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
(f) Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
(g) Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)
(h) Unspecified (U)

2. Social, Emotional and Behavioural

(a) SEBD
(b) ADD/ADHD

3. Communication and Interaction

(a) Speech and Language Difficulties (SL)
(b) Autism (AUT)
(c) Aspergers (ASP)

4.Sensory

(a) Severe/profound hearing loss (SPHL)
(b) Mild/moderate hearing loss (MMHL)
(c) Blind (BL)
(d) Partially sighted (PS)

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(e) Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)

5. Physical

(a) Cerebral Palsy (CP)
(b) Spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus (SBH)
(c) Muscular dystrophy (MD)
(d) Significant accidental injury (SAI)
(e) Other (OPN)

6. Medical Conditions/Syndromes

(a) Epilepsy (EPIL)
(b) Asthma (ASTH)
(c) Diabetes (DIAB)
(d) Anaphylaxis (ANXS)
(e) Down (DOWN)
(f) Other medical conditions/syndromes (OMCS)
(g) Interaction of complex medical needs (ICMN)
(h) Mental Health Issues (MHI)

7. Other
Other (OTH)

Source URL: https://theingots.org/community/SENframe#comment-0

Links
[1] http://www.deutscherqualifikationsrahmen.de/
[2] http://www.deutscherqualifikationsrahmen.de/de/der_dqr/stand_der_umsetzung/

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