

Audit Report 9/2021

“Special Needs Education: Is it organised in a way that meets the students’ needs?”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Special Needs Education is defined as the total of educational services provided to students with special educational needs in all levels of education.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is crucial to the provision of Special Needs Education, as it indicates the necessity to ensure that these persons are not excluded from the overall educational system and that the State takes individualised support measures aiming at their full integration.

The audit findings may be summarised as follows:

- 1.** The audit identified significant omissions in the strategic planning of Special Education and Training. To be more specific: (a) no specific European Union countries’ best practices were taken into consideration; (b) the strategic action plan was not consulted with stakeholders; and (c) actions implemented are not accompanied by measurable performance indicators.
- 2.** The evaluation process regarding the selection of the appropriate educational environment for children with special educational needs is not completed within the same school year; therefore, a significant number of these children do not receive the corresponding support.
- 3.** The implementation of complex, nevertheless necessary actions of the strategic plan has fallen behind the relevant schedule, thus creating a negative impact on the overall effectiveness of the programme. The means available for the provision of inclusive education within the overall educational system are not adapted to the learning difficulties of the students.
- 4.** Despite medical opinions issued and relevant approval, not all beneficiary children are granted with the required special education and training. This is due to significant lack of teaching staff and equipment.
- 5.** The lack of coherent and reliable information on the implementation of Special Needs Education does not allow the evaluation of the actions taken and, therefore, it is not possible to identify weaknesses and their appropriate treatment.