KEYNOTE INTERVENTION
on Inclusive Education in Europe

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A Dialogue on Inclusive Education and Disability in Europe

Summary

1. About the Polysemy of Inclusive Education

2. From Inclusive Education to Systems of Inclusive Education

3. Inclusive Education: A Lever for High-quality Education Systems

4. Inclusive Education: Policies at Stake

5. Inclusive Education: From an Opportunity to a Right

1. About the Polysemy of Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education as Participation in Education

- SEN students are educated for at least 80% of the time in a mainstream setting with their non-disabled peers (US data collection system; operational definition EADSNE, 2011)

- **Strengths**
  - Allows SEN students to participate fully in society
  - Disability as part of human diversity and a means for social cohesion
  - *'A school for all'* , changing attitudes towards disability and persons with disabilities, as well as self image of the persons with disabilities
  - Etc.

- **Challenges**
  - Focus on physical access as detrimental to quality in education and learning outcomes
  - Inclusive education can be detrimental to the individual
  - Non-participation may be a disability revelator
  - Etc.

Inclusive Education as School Effectiveness

- Education systems' ability to meet the needs of each student independently from his/her needs (OECD, 1999)

- **Strengths**
  - Promotes a needs-based approach to disability
  - Disability as an educational need among others
  - Inclusive education: a lever for high-quality education systems
  - Focuses on quality of education and effectiveness of systems
  - Etc.

- **Challenges**
  - Confusion between diversity and difference (profile of SEN students)
  - Educational needs may be resumed to success at school detrimental to social participation issues
  - Etc.

Inclusive Education as a Service Provided According to a Need

- **Commitment to educate disabled children** appropriately and according to their needs, in the same school and classroom as their peers. This involves **bringing the support services to the child** (rather than moving the child to the services), and the **child will benefit from merely being in the class** (rather than having to keep up with the other students). (Dyssegard et al, 2013)

- **Strengths**
  - An environmental approach to disability
  - Focus on appropriate education and on activation of learning potential
  - Differentiation and support according to individual learning needs

- **Challenges**
  - Education is reduced to a service detrimental to its processes
  - Support is understood as an end in itself instead of a means
  - Technical approach to accessibility

Inclusive Education as a Right (Article 24, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities UNCRPD)

- With a view to realising the right to education without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure **an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning** directed towards:

  - The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;

  - Allowing persons with disabilities to develop their personalities, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical attributes, to their fullest potential;

  - Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.

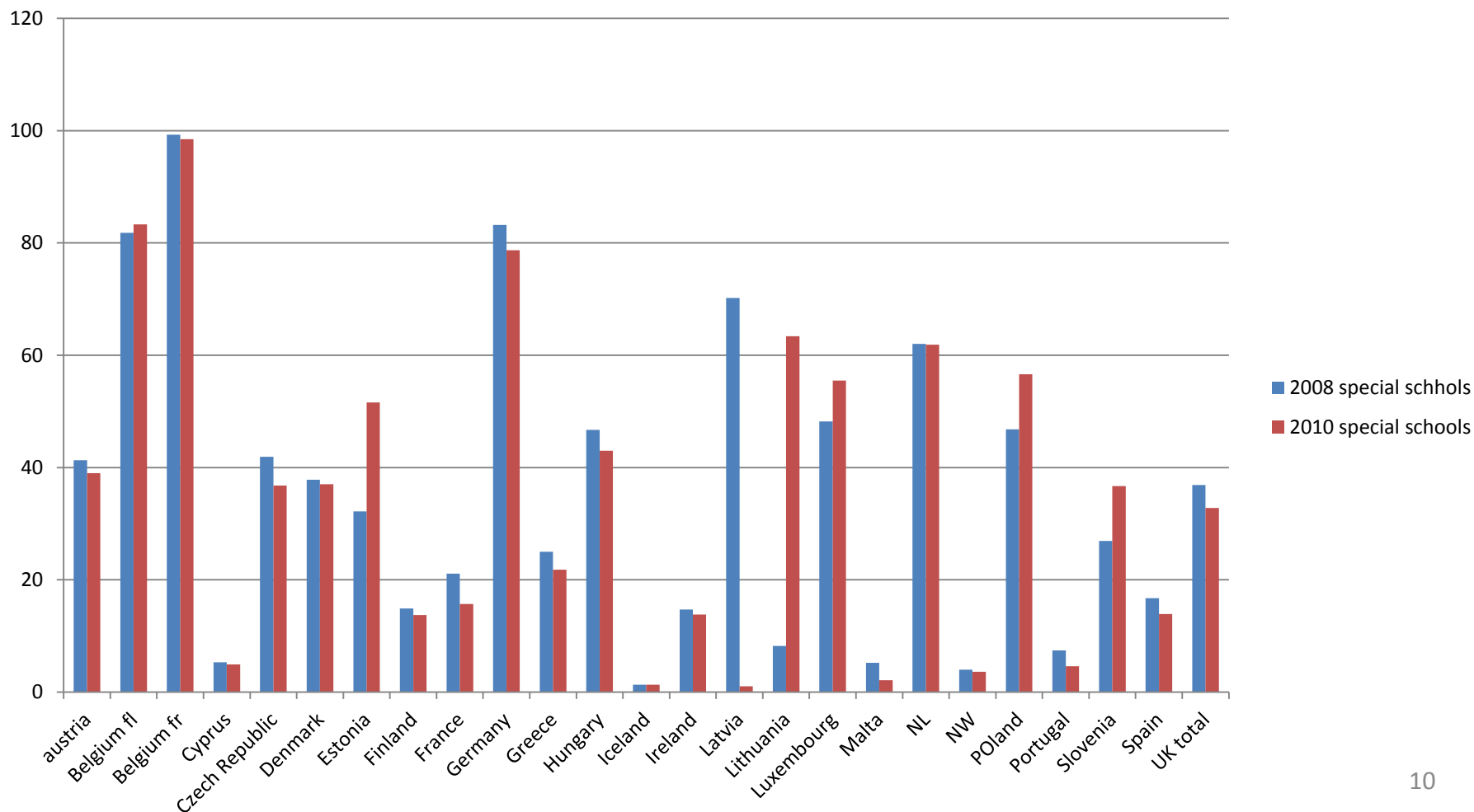# Inclusive Education as a Right (Art. 24 UNCRPD)

- **Strengths**
  - Accessibility as universal design
  - Labelling the system instead of the individual
  - SEN student as student first
  - Focus on the enabling or disabling effect of systems and practices
  - Support as empowering means for participation and citizenship
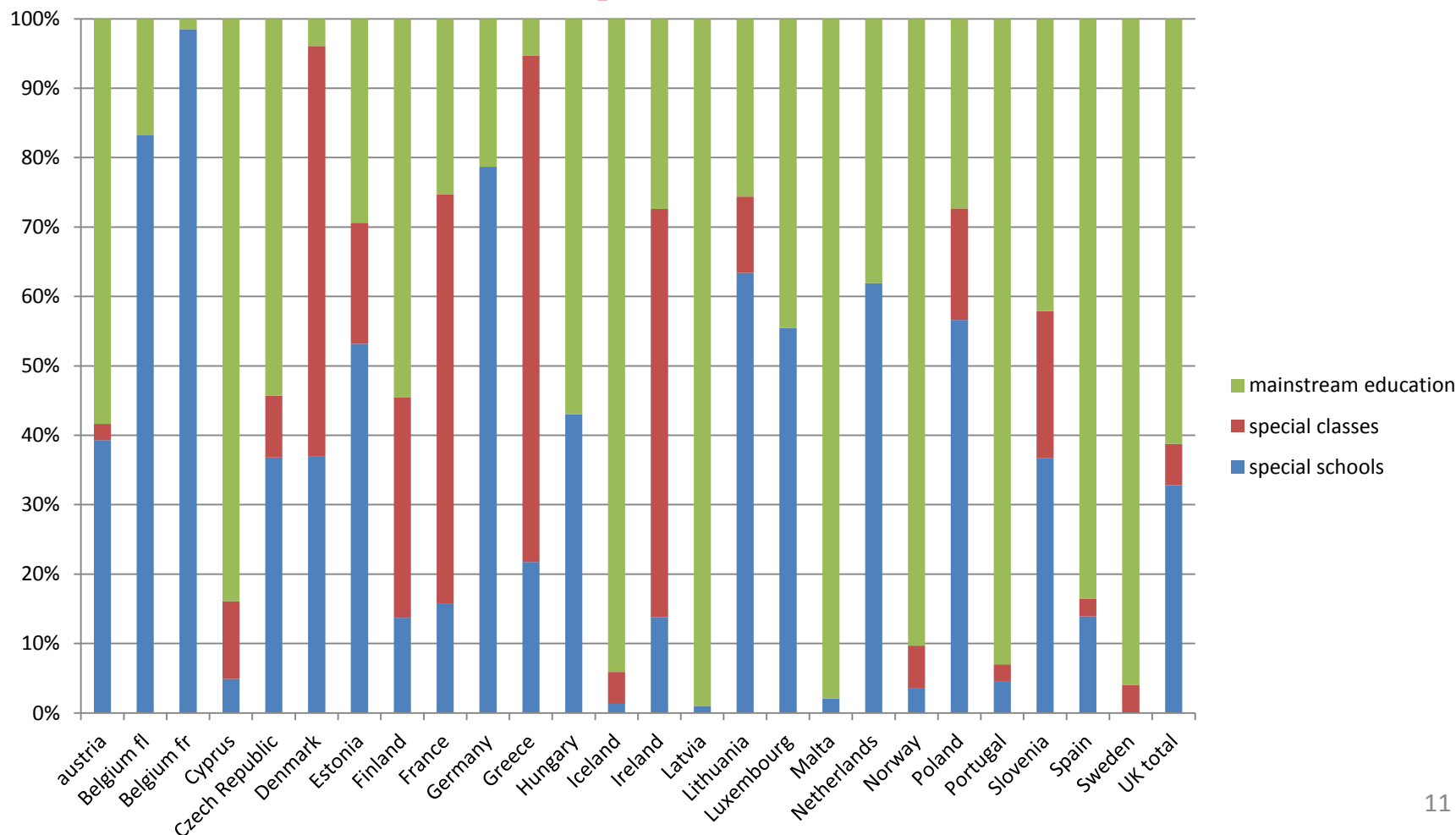 - Etc.
- **Challenges**
  - Depends on existing legal approaches of 'need'
  - Quality of needs assessment procedures frames individual rights
  - Depends on efficiency of monitoring tools (quantitative and qualitative data)
  - Etc.

2. From Inclusive Education to Systems of Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education Trends in Most European Countries
(percent of SEN students enrolled in special schools)

Educational Opportunities Differ Among European Countries

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

incluD-ed
European Network on Inclusive Education & Disability

European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

Fundación ONCE
para la Cooperación e Inclusión Social
de Personas con Discapacidad

Education Opportunities Depend on Approaches to Disability:
...where a diagnostic approach to disability prevails...

- SEN students mainly have a sensory impairment (deafness, blindness,...)

- Diversity is considered as an exception for exceptional students

- Support is focused on specific social or medical problems

- Poor assessment of educational needs at school level

- Accessibility is reduced by physical access

- Schools are not accountable for students' success

- Access and success are dependent on students' self-motivation and resources.

A Trend Depending on the Approach to Disability:
…where an educational approach to disability prevails…

- SEN students have mainly learning difficulties

- Diversity is seen by schools as an official requirement

- Support is a means for individual student success

- Procedures to evaluate educational needs exist at school level

- Accessibility is seen holistically

- Schools are accountable for the success of their SEN students.

3. Inclusive Education: A Lever for High-Quality Education Systems

At Policy Level, High Quality Inclusive Education Depends on:

- Non-discriminating legislation that promotes equal opportunities in terms of access, success and prospects

- Funding models encouraging educational institutions to keep students with SEN in mainstream educational streams (via technical, financial and human incentives)

- Systems of public accountability for schools that include students with special needs in their assessment frameworks

- Effective teacher training systems

- Effective support systems for both students and schools

- A developmental approach to disability combining accessibility and compensation issues

- Reliable and internationally-comparable data.

# At Institutional Level High-Quality, Inclusive Education Requires:

- Educational institutions' policies should foster an inclusive ethos within action plans to increase accessibility
- Partnership with support services empowering the school and the teachers to solve problems
- Outcome-based curricula development promoting a high level of adaptability of curricula and organisation and support
- An institution-based, personalised pupil assessment to identify needs that have to be met
- A holistic approach to accessibility (pedagogical, social, psychological)
- Effective and coherent transition opportunities promoting effective pathways.

At Classroom Level, Implementing High Quality Inclusive Education Requires:
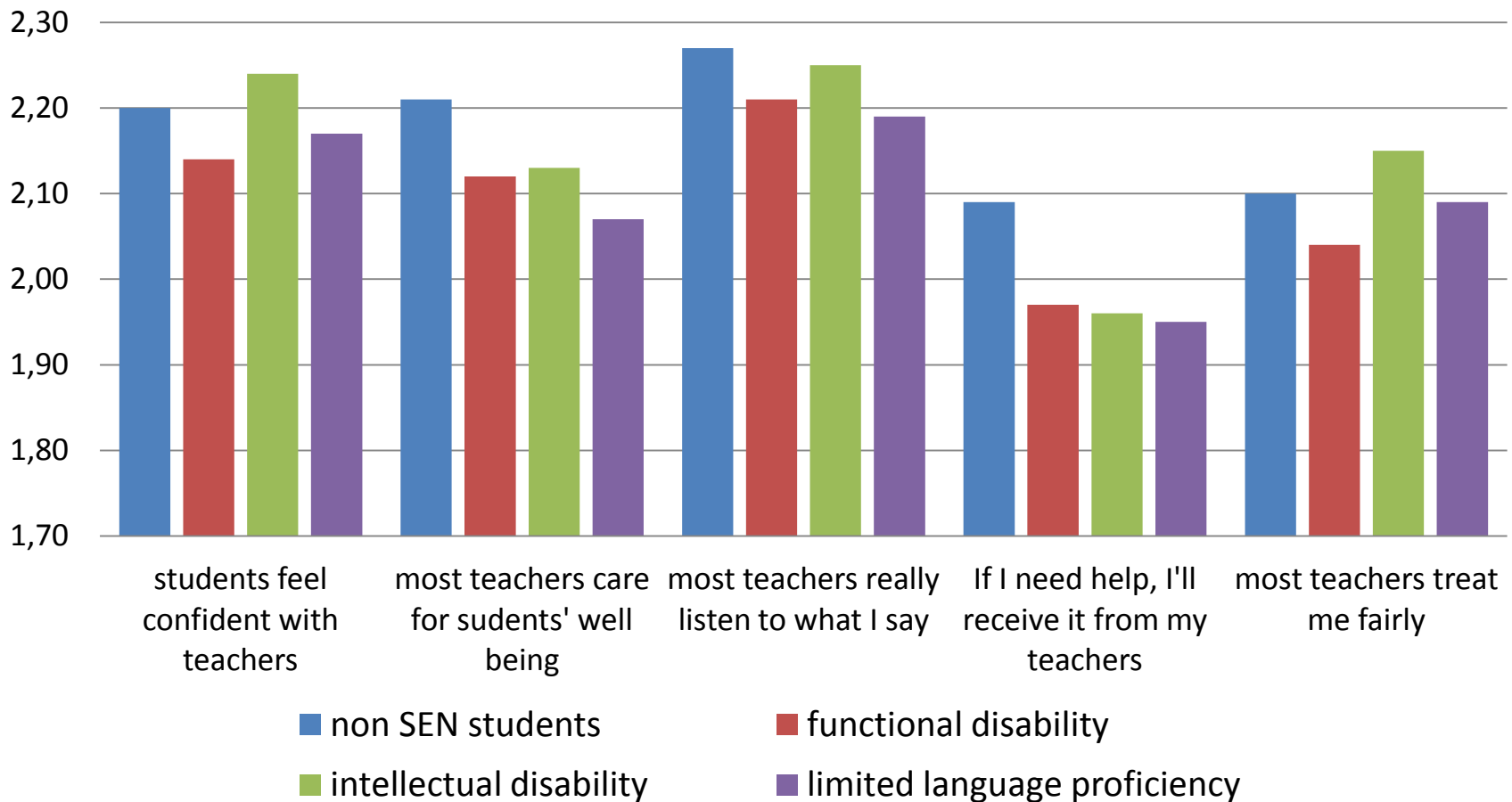
- A supportive environment for students, teachers and families. This supportive environment depends on:
  - Effective multidisciplinary teamwork enabling a holistic educational approach
  - A reduced adult-to-students ratio
  - The part-time or a full-time presence of a classroom assistant when necessary
  - Flexibility in class size and composition
  - Curriculum differentiation and development of appropriate teaching materials
  - Community and parental involvement to support SEN students both in the classroom and at home.

4. Inclusive Education: Policies at Stake

Youths with Disabilities are more likely to be Early School Leavers in Europe (18-24) (2009) (ANED, 2011)
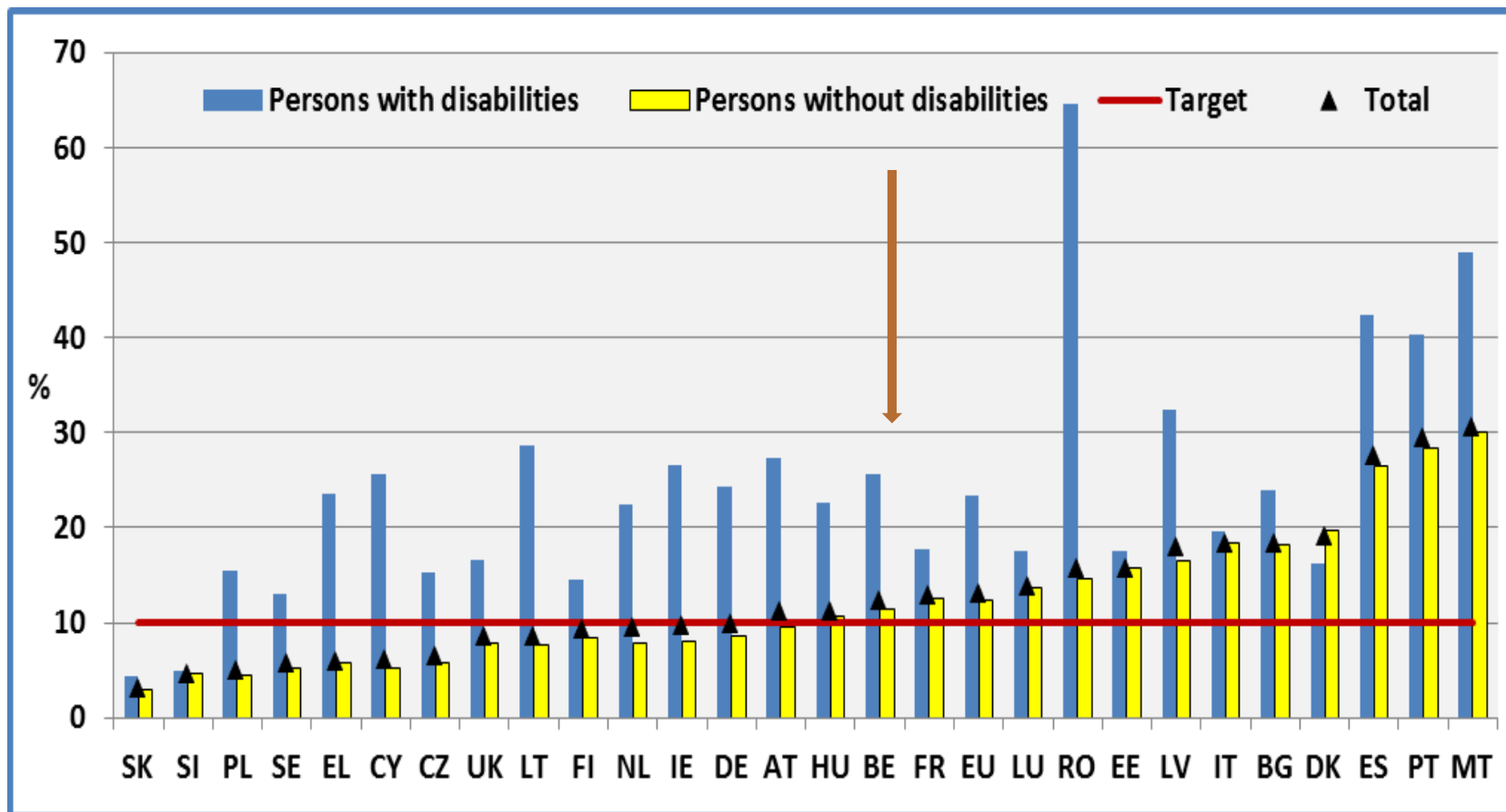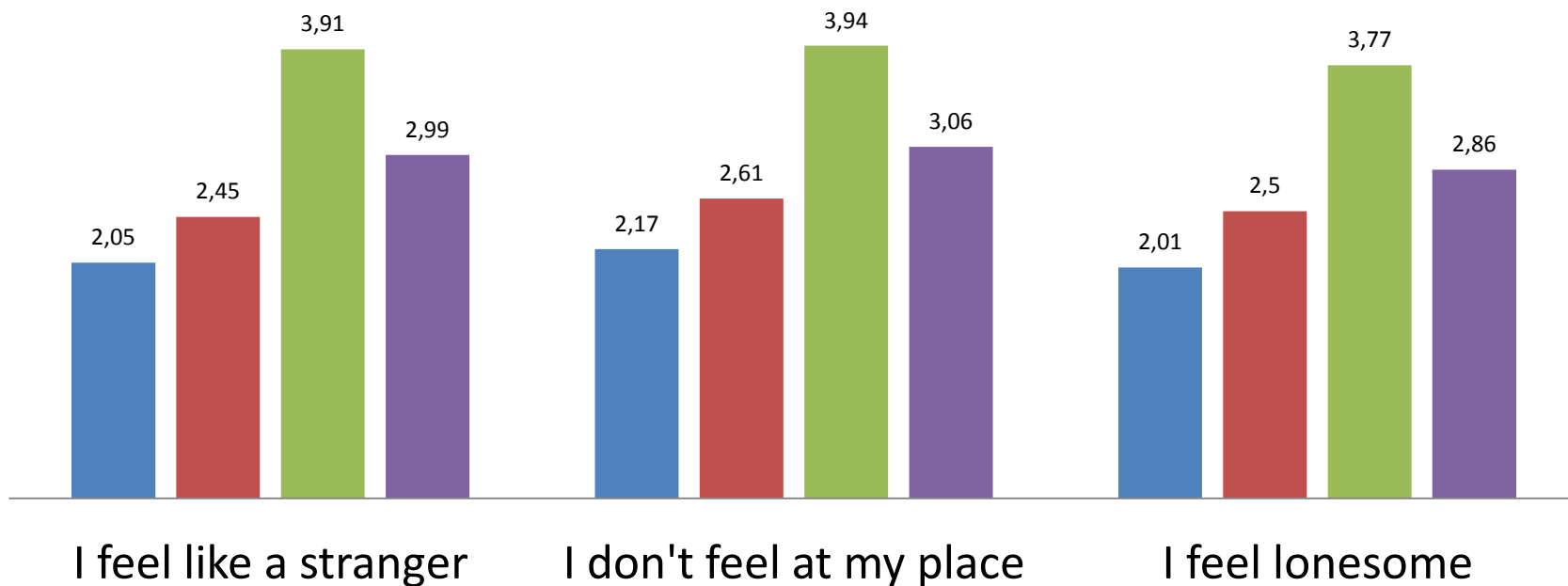
A Lack of Education that may be related to Teachers' Difficulties in Meeting SEN Students' Needs (OECD, 2007)

Legend:
- non SEN students
- functional disability
- intellectual disability
- limited language proficiency

Categories:
- students feel confident with teachers
- most teachers care for sudents' well being
- most teachers really listen to what I say
- If I need help, I'll receive it from my teachers
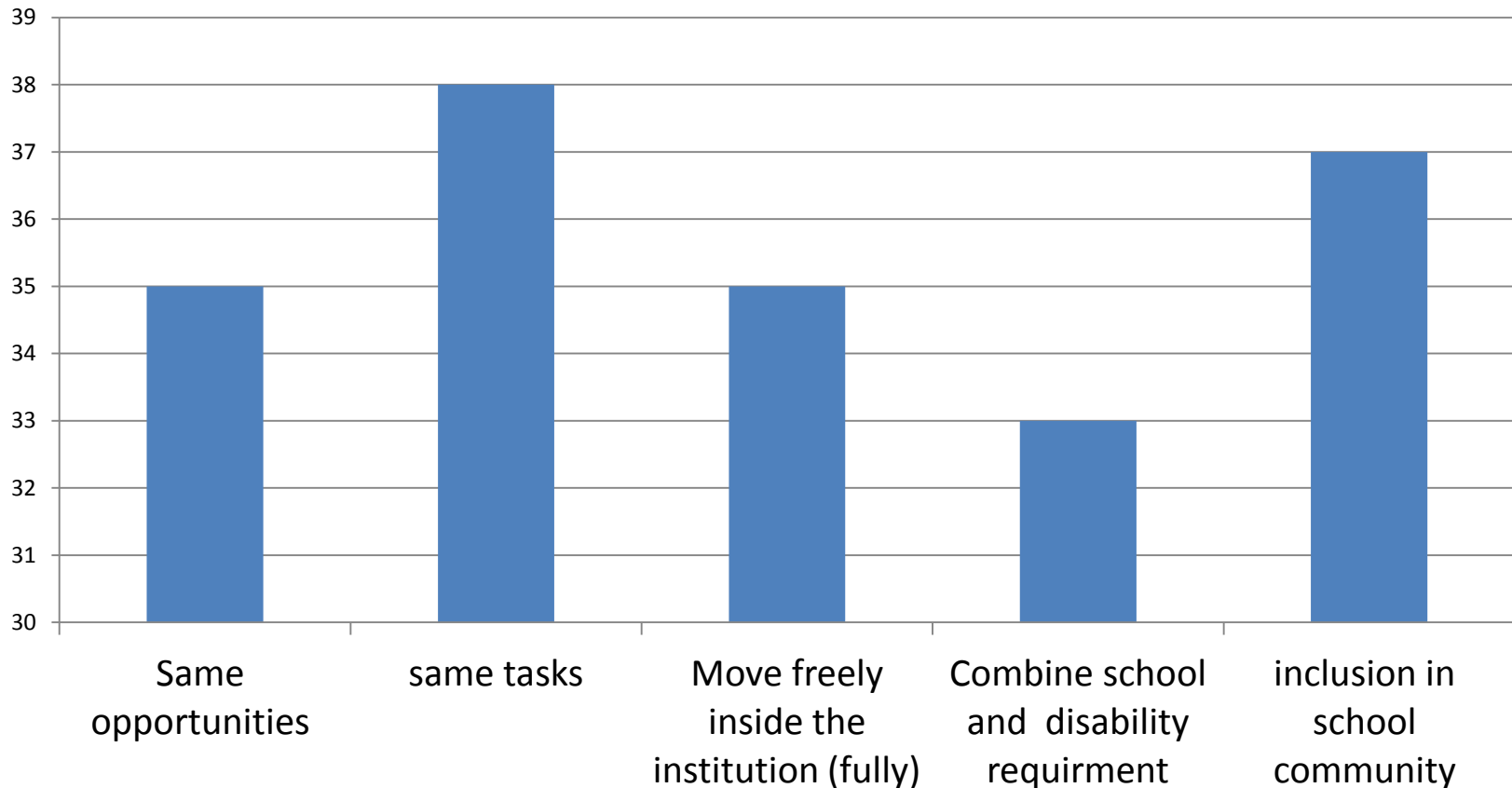- most teachers treat me fairly

A Lack of Education that may be related to Teachers' Difficulties in Considering Students' Inclusion in the School Community (OECD, 2007)

My school is a place where

- non SEN students
- functional disability
- intellectual disability
- limited language proficiency

I feel like a stranger
- 2,05
- 2,45
- 3,91
- 2,99

I don't feel at my place
- 2,17
- 2,61
- 3,94
- 3,06

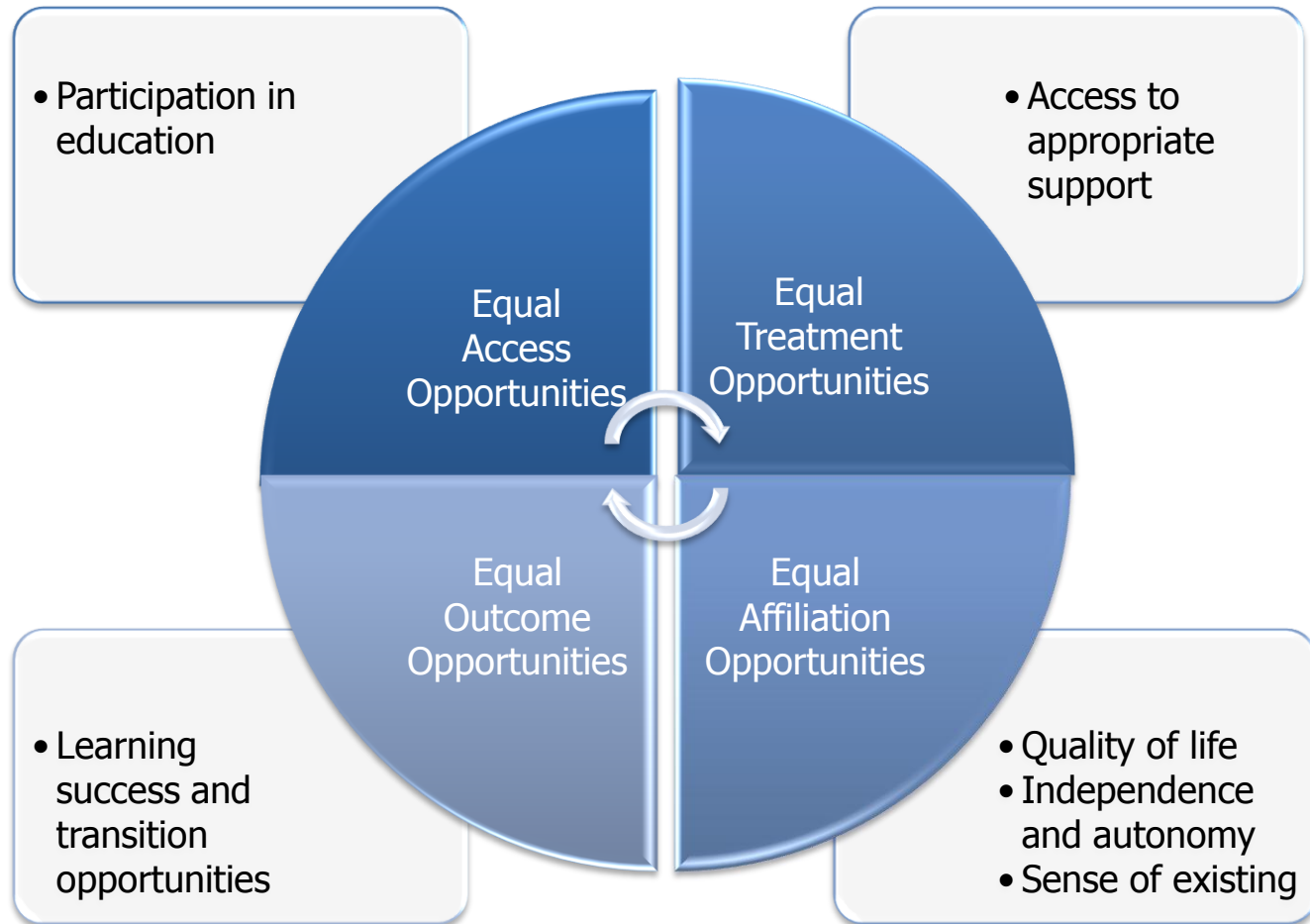**I feel lonesome**
- 2,01
- 2,5
- 3,77
- 2,86

A Lack of Education that may be related to Ineffective Support (Ebersold, 2012)

5. Inclusive Education:
From an Opportunity to a Right

Data for Monitoring the Implementation of Rights to Inclusive Education

- Participation in education

- Access to appropriate support

Equal Access Opportunities

Equal Treatment Opportunities

Equal Outcome Opportunities

Equal Affiliation Opportunities

- Learning success and transition opportunities

- Quality of life
- Independence and autonomy
- Sense of existing

Promote Inclusive Education by Labelling Resources and Provision Instead of Individuals

Some References

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