

Committee: Council of Europe – Education

Agenda item: “*Education of Children with Special Learning Needs; Addressing Special Education Policies*”

Country: Malta

Delegate:

With education being the most powerful tool a person can hold, special education policies should not remain out of the agenda. As reported by recent studies, the number of pupils with special learning needs in Europe is constantly expanding, reaching a number of 15 million. That being said, it is vital that all European countries take further action regarding special education, in order to assist such students to succeed in life the way they deserve.

Malta, in particular, was one of the first United Nations member states to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007. Since 2005, our country has introduced a publication called “For All Children to Succeed” with the aim to set out proposals for the reorganization and collaboration among schools. The initial goal has been to ensure that the individual needs of all learners were catered for and continuous efforts have made a difference ever since. In addition, in 2009 the Student Services Department of our Ministry of Education published proposals for a special school reform. All in all, it is apparent that education has been and will remain to be a vital priority for our country, thus providing equal and enhanced opportunities for all students, disabled or non.

Taking into consideration, however, that there is always room for improvement, we find urgent to propose more concrete solutions. To begin with, understanding that the adequacy of the current educational funding is a key-aspect of the issue, it is imperative to focus on boosting special education schools with the tools, equipment and facilities needed. Even more, the needs and numbers of special education experts shall be further examined by inviting more teachers, pedagogues, psychologists to the concept of special education and investing on their constant information and adaptation to new educational policies and ideas. Finally, we believe that diversity ought to be promoted, especially through the media, in order for citizens to understand that individuality is not something to be ashamed of.