

InclEdU 4AllNeeds

Final Conference Chisinau
28-29 January 2026

REPORT

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**“European Sectoral Social Partners in Education promoting
inclusion of persons with special needs in education”**

(Project *InclEdu4AllNeeds*, number 101145637)



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Introduction

The Final Conference took place in Chisinau, Moldova, on 28-29 January 2026, to conclude the social dialogue project [InclEdu4AllNeeds](#) - "European Sectoral Social Partners in Education promoting inclusion of persons with special needs in education" (2024 - 2026). Led by ETUCE and EFEE with European Commission co-funding, this project supports the 2024-2026 of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Education (ESSDE) Work Programme. Contemporary global issues, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools and the ongoing war in Ukraine, have had significant consequences, particularly for students who were already disadvantaged. Committed to inclusive, high-quality education, the project promotes effective social partner collaboration to integrate persons with special needs. It assesses policies and practices, providing recommendations for all stakeholders involved in special needs education.

Project objectives:

- To evaluate the existing legislation, special programmes and measures undertaken at national, regional, local or institutional level as regards to the inclusion of persons with special needs in the education system and education policies, as well as assess the impact of the EU policies on inclusion on the national educational and employment policies, identifying challenges (e.g. special needs teachers' shortage) and potential solutions;
- To identify and promote the joint approaches, practices and strategies of social partners in education to ensure the full inclusion of persons with special needs in the education system and education and employment policies,
- To address the relevant professional needs of school leaders, teachers and other education personnel, challenges linked to working and learning conditions (including digital and sustainable education), initial and continuous professional development, recruitment and retention, and other areas;
- To support education trade unions and education employer organisations across Europe to become more pro-active in addressing the issue of the inclusion of persons with special needs in education systems with an intersectional approach and against the backdrop of the consequences of COVID-19, in their national social dialogue structures and within the European Semester consultation practices at national level;
- To update knowledge and peer learning on this topic in the ESSDE Committee;
- To draft concrete guidelines on how to promote effective inclusion of persons with special needs in the education system and education policies through joint social partner initiatives at national, regional and local level.

Project activities:

- An **online survey** among ETUCE and EFEE national member organisations;
- **Focus groups and school visits** organised in Solingen (Germany) and Bucharest (Romania) with the participation of local social partners in education. The visits consist of school visits, interview and filming in order to look at best joint practices of social partners in the inclusion of persons with special needs in education, which are currently being implemented;
- **Two training seminars:** in Paris (France) and Lisbon (Portugal) with participants from other ETUCE and EFEE member organisations. The sessions will be used to present and discuss the research and country visits outcomes, build the knowledge and capacity of social partners on the topic, exchange good practices, and discuss the draft guidelines on how to promote effective inclusion of persons with special needs in the education system and education policies through joint social partner initiatives at national, regional and local level.
- **Final conference** in Chisinau, Moldova, where practical guidelines on how to promote effective inclusion of persons with special needs in the education system and education policies through joint social partner initiatives at national, regional and local level, will be drafted;
- **Filming a series of short videos** on the current situation persons with special needs in education systems in several European countries, as well as on the role of education social partners in addressing the issue.



Final Conference

On 28-29 January 2026, ETUCE and EFEE held the final conference of the joint project InclEdu4AllNeeds - Inclusive education for all needs in Chişinău, Moldova. The conference brought together education trade unions, education employers, public authorities, international organisations and researchers from across Europe to reflect on project outcomes and to strengthen the role of European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education in promoting the inclusion of students with special educational needs and disabilities and education personnel with disabilities.

The event was hosted with the support of the Education and Science Trade Union Federation of Moldova, underlining the country's ongoing efforts to align inclusive education policies with European and international standards. Opening the conference, Dan Perciun, Minister of Education and Research of Moldova, and Ghenadie Donos, President of the Education and Science Trade Union Federation of Moldova, highlighted the importance of long-term cooperation, social dialogue and sustained investment to build a fair and inclusive education system, particularly in the context of recent crises affecting children and education systems.



Research findings: inclusion requires systemic change and social dialogue

A central element of the conference was the presentation of [research findings](#) developed within the project, presented by Dr Alison Milner (Aalborg University). The research examined how social dialogue can support inclusive education policies and practices across Europe, focusing on both students with special educational needs and disabilities and education personnel with disabilities.

The findings confirm that inclusive education remains unevenly implemented across Europe and is often hindered by insufficient funding, teacher shortages, lack of professional development, and structural barriers within education systems. Students with disabilities continue to face higher risks of early school leaving, exclusion from education and training, and lower educational attainment.

At the same time, the research highlighted that inclusive education cannot be achieved without inclusive employment practices. Education personnel with disabilities remain significantly underrepresented in the profession and face persistent barriers, including inaccessible workplaces, negative attitudes, limited disclosure due to fear of discrimination, and narrow definitions of professional “competence”.

The project factsheets presented at the conference call for education social partners to embed disability rights across teacher policies, recruitment, employment and social dialogue, ensuring full participation of disabled people and alignment with the UN CRPD through transparent monitoring and accountability. They also stress the need for adequate funding, inclusive-by-design physical and digital environments, data-informed policymaking, targeted training and awareness-raising, so that education workplaces enable the full inclusion, equality and professional contribution of education personnel with disabilities.

Films showcasing social dialogue in practice

Participants also viewed short project films illustrating concrete social dialogue practices from different national contexts ([Germany](#), [Romania](#), [Belgium](#) and [Portugal](#)). The films demonstrate how education trade unions and employers are working together to promote inclusion through collective bargaining, joint policy development, awareness-raising and cooperation with public authorities and civil society organisations.

Inclusion of Persons with Special Needs in Education and the Teaching Profession in Moldova

The session on the inclusion of persons with special needs in Moldova’s education system and teaching profession highlighted significant progress over the past decade, alongside persistent challenges that require continued attention. According to **Inga Grosu from the Ministry of Education and Research**, Moldova has been actively promoting inclusive education for more than ten years, with a comprehensive national programme for 2024-2027 that ensures access to education for all children and young people with special needs. Today, 95% of these children attend mainstream schools, supported by more than 1,400 special education staff, and the country has developed a network of 150 resource centres, invested in early diagnosis, specialist staff in kindergartens, and assistive devices such as those provided through UNICEF-supported initiatives. Yet despite these achievements, issues such as stigma, discrimination, uneven resource distribution, and the need for better support for parents remain central challenges, as do efforts to expand mental health services and inclusion within vocational education and training.

Virginia Rusnac, representing the Republican Centre for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance, emphasised that since Moldova closed all residential institutions and reintegrated children with special needs into general education, considerable progress has been made in aligning policy with practice. Schools and kindergartens have become increasingly inclusive, and multi-disciplinary teams have supported children and families through this transition. However, gaps continue to persist: only half of schools are fully equipped for inclusion, staff burnout is widespread, specialist shortages—particularly in rural areas—hinder effective implementation, and the non-compulsory nature of kindergarten attendance before age six limits early detection of needs. Strengthening professional training, reducing class sizes where possible, expanding parental engagement, and developing standardised guidelines remain key steps to overcoming these barriers.

The session also gave space to personal experiences that illustrated the human dimension of inclusive education. **UNICEF Ambassador Emilia Teleuca** shared her story as a young woman with autism who spent years receiving incorrect diagnoses and faced exclusion and punitive practices in early education settings. Only in France did she receive an accurate diagnosis, and although she later benefited from family support and persevered academically, her experience reflects the difficulties many children with disabilities once faced in Moldova. She stressed the importance of trained educators, patient communication, and sustained advocacy, noting that although significant improvements have taken place over the last fifteen years, further work is needed to ensure that all children receive the support they deserve.

Vasilache Elena, a psycho-pedagogue with a disability working in a kindergarten, demonstrated how inclusion also applies to the teaching profession. She explained that her disability does not define her ability to contribute meaningfully to education. With adapted working hours and full rights, she creates emotionally supportive environments for children, collaborates with colleagues and parents, and also provides private psychological counselling. Her experience shows that work is not only a right but a psychological necessity, and that teachers with disabilities can play a vital role both in schools and within trade unions.

From the trade union perspective, **Pătrașcu Valentina, an experienced kindergarten educator and union leader**, highlighted that persons with disabilities require respect, rights, and equal opportunities—not compassion. She emphasised the need for trade unions to strengthen anti-discrimination provisions, promote reasonable accommodation, raise awareness among employers, and ensure that teachers with disabilities are fully recognised as part of society and the education workforce. She argued that with openness and the removal of barriers, every teacher can reach their full potential.

Finally, **Ghenadie Donos, President of the Education and Science Trade Union Federation of Moldova**, presented findings from a national survey showing that teachers continue to face substantial obstacles in inclusive classrooms. These include lack of personnel, insufficient funding, limited parental involvement, high workloads, inadequate special training, and major gaps in school infrastructure and accessibility. Teachers are motivated and willing to support inclusion, but without improved resources, better human-resource planning, reduced bureaucracy, stronger support groups, and more effective social dialogue, inclusion risks becoming unsustainable. Ensuring quality education for all therefore requires systemic change and coordinated commitment from all stakeholders.



Joint guidelines: a roadmap for inclusive education systems

Conference participants worked on designing and validating the major outcome of the project - joint ETUCE-EFEE guidelines for inclusion of persons with special needs in education and teaching profession, which are to be finalised and adopted at the next meeting of the ESSDE. The guidelines provide a shared framework and concrete recommendations for social partners in education at European, national, regional and local levels. They also represent an important and necessary first step towards collaborative, coordinated action and serve as a critical lens through which social partners in education can monitor and evaluate their progress over time.

Looking ahead

In the closing session, John MacGabhann, ETUCE President, and Zoltán Dubécz, EFEE Executive Committee Member, reaffirmed the commitment of European education social partners to continue working together to promote inclusive, high-quality education for all. They underlined that the project outcomes - research, films and joint guidelines - provide a strong basis for future advocacy, capacity building and policy development at both European and national levels. The InclEdu4AllNeeds project demonstrates that inclusive education is not only a policy objective, but a shared social responsibility, and that strong, well-resourced social dialogue is essential to ensure that no learner and no education worker is left behind.



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