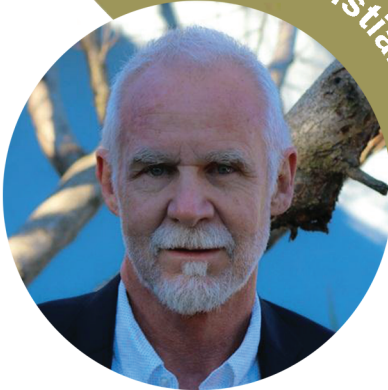




# YICER

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Prof. Dr. Christian J Faltis



Prof. Dr. Mustafa Baloğlu



Prof. Dr. Stephen Lafert





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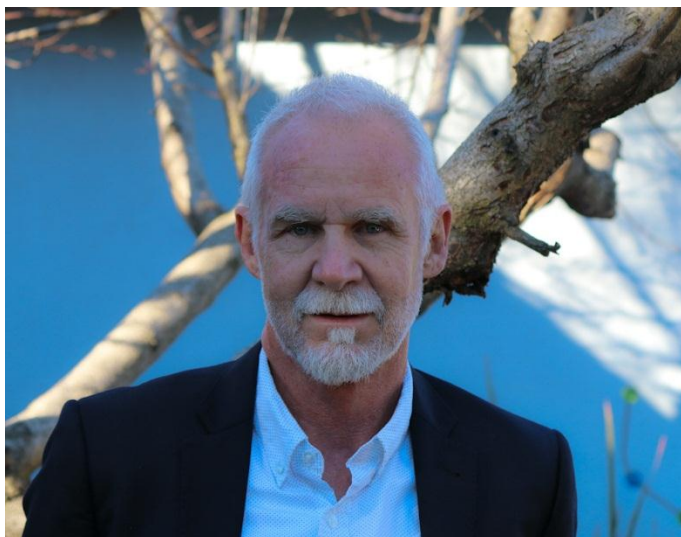
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## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

### Keynote Speaker I

**Christian J Faltis, PhD**



Christian Faltis (Ph.D. Stanford University) is the Dolly and David Fiddymont Endowed Chair in Teacher Education and Professor of Language, Literacy and Culture in the School of Education at the University of California, Davis, where he teaches courses in teacher education, and he has published 19 books and over 60 scholarly articles and book chapters. His recent books are *Academic Language and Second Language Learning* 2013, with M. B.

Arias), *The Arts and Emergent Bilingual Youth* 2013, with S. Chappell), *Implementing Language Policy in Arizona* (2012, with M.B. Arias) and *Education, Immigrant Students, Refugee Students, and English Learners* (2011, with G. Valdés). He also published "Art and Living Inquiry into Anti-immigration Discourse," *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 2012. He is Editor of *Review of Research in Education*, Volume 37, 2013, and Volume 39, 2015.. Faltis is an oil painter, whose works address immigration and social justice issues.

Presentation Title

**"Pedagogical Language Knowledge, Teacher Education, and Advocacy for Language Diversity"**

### Keynote Speaker II

**Prof. Dr. Mustafa BALOĞLU**



Prof. Baloglu received his Ph.D. degrees from Texas A&M University-Commerce in the fields of counselor education and educational psychology. His main research interests are mathematics and statistics anxiety, learning, and giftedness. He is currently general director of special education and guidance services in the Ministry of

Education. In addition, he is a professor of special education at Hacettepe University, Ankara.

Presentation Title:

**"Gifted education in Turkey: Past, Present, and Future"**

**"Turkiyede ustun yeteneklilerin egitimi: Gecmisi, gunumuzdeki durumu ve gelecegi"**

**Keynote Speaker III**  
**Prof. Dr. Stephen Lafer**



Stephen Lafer is a professor in the College of Education at the University of Nevada, Reno where he has worked for the last 26 years. His areas of expertise are secondary English arts education and socio-cultural contexts of education. He is the co-author of the book *The Interdisciplinary Teacher's Handbook* and several articles on the teaching of English within an integrated curriculum. He was instrumental in bringing the middle school movement to Nevada, helping to develop the Billingshurst Middle School curriculum and working with teachers to implement a project-based, problem-solving oriented team-taught

program. He is co-founder of the Rainshadow Community Charter High School in Reno, Nevada, a schools based on principles developed in the *Teacher's Handbook* and tested during the ten years of work with teachers in the Truckee River Projects, a program for in-service teachers who the Projects engaged in the kind of interdisciplinary explorations we were suggesting be used in their classrooms. Billingshurst continues to be one of the most successful schools in Nevada and Rainshadow is now in its eleventh year of helping students who do not succeed in school graduate with a love and respect for the process of learning.

**Presentation Title;**

**"Culture, Language, the Growth of Individuals and the Possibility for Democratic Societies"**

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# Preschool Inclusive Education Systems in Some EU Countries, Macedonia and Turkey

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## Abstract

**Research subject:** Analysis of preschool systems in some EU countries, Macedonia and Turkey in the field of inclusion of children with special education needs (SEN). **Purpose of Study:** Comparison between Swedish, German, Dutch, Macedonian and Turkish inclusive preschool systems with the purpose to note positive practices in *legislation, financing, identification of SNE and teacher training* as well as to explore the possibility for their implementation in Macedonia. **Methods:** Comparative method of research was used. All available documentation was analyzed and data was cross-referenced. **Findings:** Sweden's *legislation* enables equal access to all. In Germany legislation is different in different states. In Macedonia and Turkey, preschoolers can visit regular or private kindergartens. In Sweden, Holland and Turkey financing is granted for each pupil. In Germany institutions are funded by local authorities. In Macedonia pupils with SEN are financed like their peers. The *identification of SEN* in Sweden and Germany is different in every municipality. In Holland the assessment will lead to inclusion or special education. In Macedonia every child is assessed by the Institute for Mental Health. The identification in Turkey is made in Rehberlik ve Araştırma Merkezi – specialized centers for diagnostics and prognostics. In Germany, Sweden and Holland, *teacher training* is consisted of basic teacher training and specialization. In Macedonia professionals must have a B.A. in special education and rehabilitation. In Turkey there are special educators which are clinically oriented, teachers for different types of disabilities, and certified special educators. **Recommendations:** Legislation in Macedonia should enable equal access to all with a new education bill that will provide additional financing for children with SEN like in Turkey or Holland and Sweden. Identification tools should be modified following newest trends. Regarding teacher training we can use the good practices in Turkey especially in the field of the clinically oriented special educators.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, preschool education, financing, legislation, SEN identification, teacher training.

## **1. Introduction**

Early childhood, from birth to the age of 5, is a critical period in the life of every child. During this period, the foundation for all later development and learning is laid, including critical skills, predispositions for academic learning and interactions with others. All young children, including the ones with disabilities, depend on the experiences and opportunities given in these environments. All children have the basic human right to experience these activities, interactions and relationships that enhance their learning and development. Families of children without disabilities have many educational options for their children. Families of children with disabilities have the same options, but additionally they should receive services and support, so that their children can experience and benefit from these environments (Chico & Koch, 2005).

There is no single definition of inclusion within the early education context. According to Odom et al (Johns Hopkins School of Education, 2012) the definition should contain several characteristics: 1) Inclusion implies active participation of children with disabilities and children without disabilities in the same preschool classroom; 2) For the children with special needs, additional services should be provided, based on an assessment and an action plan constructed by professionals and the parents; 3) These services should be provided by collaboration of experts from different fields; 4) The effect of the placement and the curriculum is evaluated by determining the progress towards the goals set by the parents and the professionals.

In order to implement inclusion, or the inclusive process in preschools in one country, the policy makers should address several problems like the lack of a clear definition, lack of studies in ordinary settings and lack of a systematic solution. This paper contains data acquired by the comparative analysis of several education systems in the area of preschool inclusive education of children with disabilities and it is an addition to the corpus of knowledge gained by comparative studies.

## **2. Methodology**

With the purpose to obtain significant data in several areas, important to the inclusive preschool education, we decided to conduct a qualitative comparative study. We made a content analysis of policy and planning documents from government and education-related organizations. The goal of this paper is twofold: both analytical and evaluative. The purpose is to generate standards for development of proper inclusive preschool education policies.

### *2.1 Research subject:*

The subject of our research was to make an analysis of the preschool systems in some EU countries (Sweden, Germany and Holland), Macedonia and Turkey in the field of inclusion of children with special education needs (SEN). We used a discursive approach to the policy analysis (Dombos, Krizsan, Verloo, & Zentai, 2012, p. 4).

### *2.2 Purpose of Study:*

Comparison between Swedish, German, Dutch, Macedonian and Turkish inclusive preschool systems with the purpose to note positive practices in the areas of the legislation, financing, identification of SNE and teacher training as well as to explore the possibility for their implementation in Macedonia.

### *2.3 Hypothesis:*

H<sub>0</sub> –European countries have more advanced and developed inclusive practices than Macedonia and Turkey.

H<sub>1</sub> –Sweden has the best legislation regarding the preschool inclusive education considering the open policy regarding education for all.

H<sub>2</sub> – Financing of the preschool education of children with special needs is better managed in the EU countries than in Turkey and Macedonia.

H<sub>3</sub> – Identification and instruments of identification of the children with special needs is well developed in all countries, considering is one of the crucial aspects of the special education and rehabilitation science.

H<sub>4</sub> – Teacher training in all countries has a fundamentally good structure, considering the long education tradition in all of them.

### 2.4 Methods

Comparative method of research was used. All available documentation was analyzed and data was cross-referenced. The comparative method is not new. There is no single method that is best for studying matters in the social sciences. The comparative method searches for differences and similarities that explain relations between certain issues. This method has become indispensable for gaining results that can be applied universally (Winter & Prohaska, 1983, p. 471). The comparative approach within an international network of researchers is becoming crucial to all social science research that sets itself as the target of explaining and accompanying social transformations (Ghora-Gobin, 1998).

The research was done during a 3 months period, from May-July 2014. It comprised desk-based research. The desk based research consisted of the examination of existing literature in the fields of legislation, financing, SEN identification and teacher training in the preschool inclusive education in Sweden, Germany, Holland, Turkey and Macedonia. We used reviews for policy and practices purposes as: policy reporting; policy informing; evidence for practice; resources for practices (Torrance & Sebba, 2007). The analysis was done in six stages: scoping, searching, selecting, analyzing, synthesizing and reporting. During the analysis we took into account the internal coherence and the assessment of the validity and reliability of the findings.

### 3. Findings

After the analysis of the data from all the available sources we subdivided the areas of research into 4 areas (according the hypothesis): legislation, financing, SEN identification and teacher training. The results are given according to these subdivisions.

#### 3.1 Legal system

In order to verify the first hypothesis we made analysis of all available documents regarding legislation in the field of preschool inclusive education in all the researched countries. The data is shown in table 1.

**Table 1. Legislation regarding preschool inclusive policies in Sweden, Germany, Holland, Turkey and Macedonia**

Country	Law for inclusion	Equal access to all	Provision of an IFP	Free choice of preschools	Local authorities responsibility
Sweden	X	√	√	√	√
Germany	X	√	√	√	X
Holland	X	√	√	√	X
Turkey	X	√	√	√	X
Macedonia	X	√	√	√	√

We took five criteria in consideration (related to the legislation). First of all that was whether there is a law for inclusion in these countries, which would have shown a high level of inclusive practices in the analyzed countries. Our research showed that there is no law for inclusive preschool education in the above mentioned countries.

The basic principle guiding all **Swedish** education from childcare to the transition period is access equivalent for all. There is no law for inclusion in the preschool education because in Sweden all the children are seen and treated equal. An action plan for provision (sometimes referred as an Individual Family Plan) should be written for all children that have needs for special support. The local authorities are responsible for the organization of childcare and school activities and they should ensure the possibilities of reaching the goals.

The right of disabled children to education and training appropriate to their needs in **Germany** is stated in the Basic Law (Grundgesetz, Art. 3 – R1), “Nobody must have disadvantages due to his/her handicap.” The responsibility for **early years education** resides mainly with the Ministry for Social Affairs. This also applies to the provision for children in kindergarten. The phase of early intervention is not part of the public school system. “Disabled children should, as far as possible, attend kindergarten and school together with non-disabled peers” (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, 2014). IFP’s are made whenever there is a need for additional support or services and are revised twice per year. In Germany there are three types of kindergartens: regular, inclusive and special (EVEIL, 2014)

One of the key features of the **Dutch** education system in general, guaranteed under article 23 of the Constitution, is the freedom of education (Fanchamps, den Otter, Siebelink, & Haccou, 2011, p. 14). Childcare as a policy area is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW). (Middleton, 2012, p. 6). Legislation to ensure the inclusive nature of the education system is the obligation to attend school which is laid down in the Compulsory Education Act 1969.

In **Turkey** there are Special Education and Rehabilitation Centers that are offering individual classes, group classes and physiotherapy according to child’s disability and the recommendations from RAM. The Programs are individual according to child’s disability and previous knowledge, but they mostly include development of: motor skills, psychomotor skills, following instructions skills, imitation skills, social skills, Receptive Language skills, Expressive Language Skills, Language, Speech and Alternative Communication skills, matching skills etc. After the first visit, children with disabilities are going to RAM every 3-6 months for evaluation, when the same team is checking how successful is the child with this program, and making the necessary changes like giving new aims or reducing the previous.

In **Macedonia** children with special needs can visit regular kindergartens or private kindergartens. There are no special kindergartens only preparatory classes for primary special schools. The Law for Child Protection (Law for Child Protection, 2013) enables equal access to all children in all the state preschools. The idea of inclusion can be seen in several other policies and laws. Preschools are under rule of the Ministry for Labor and Social Politics. Every professional that works with children with SEN, included in the regular preschools must develop an IFP.

### *3.2 Financing*

Financing is an integral part of any process, including the inclusive processes. The results regarding finances are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Financing of preschool inclusive education in Sweden, Germany, Holland, Turkey and Macedonia**

Country	Pupil-oriented financing	Government funding	Parental fees	Municipality funding	Accessible teaching materials
Sweden	√	√	√	√	√
Germany	X	√	√	√	√
Holland	X	√	X	X	√
Turkey	√	√	√	X	√
Macedonia	X	√	√	√	X

Regarding the finances we took in consideration several aspects: whether the financing is pupil oriented (e.g. the state provides supplementary funds for children with special needs, according the services needed); whether there is government funding or municipality funding or both; whether the parents pay certain fees for their children's kindergarten and whether there are free and accessible teaching materials.

Local authorities in **Sweden** are bound by law to provide a number of basic services among which the provision of pre-school and childcare take a major part. Municipalities are free to use collected taxes and state funding for whatever services and systems are judged to be best. The State, through the National Agency of Special Needs Education and Schools (2012) offers: special needs support, education in special needs schools, accessible teaching materials and government funding. Childcare is financed by locally collected tax revenues, state grants and parental fees. There are no separate funds for special education.

The basic framework for financing and funding is the yearly education budget of the Federation, the Länder and the local authorities in **Germany**. Agencies responsible for financing are: government, districts (rural districts and municipalities with the status of a district) and communes. Institutions providing pre-primary education are funded by public and non-public bodies (local authorities, church etc.). In addition, parental contributions are levied to help cover costs; this depends on parents' financial circumstances. An article (DEUTCHE WELLE, 2013) outlines the right of children under the age of three to a daycare placement (as of August 2013), the simultaneous introduction of subsidiary payment for parents who care for their children at home.

In **Holland** on 1 August 2006, the block grant funding system was introduced in primary education. The funding of special needs education has been modified in 2003. The system changed from a supply-oriented financing to a system in which the means are forwarded to the person requiring the services to more demand-oriented financing. The policy is known as the 'back-pack' policy: pupils take the funding with them to the school of their choice. If a student meets the criteria for this so-called 'pupil-bound budget', parents and pupils can choose a school, special or mainstream, and take part in decision making on the best way to use the funds in order to meet the student's special needs.

In **Turkey** The stay in private kindergartens is covered by the parents. In the government kindergartens families pay a certain amount to have their children benefit from preschool education. Where, and according to what priorities, the preschool educational institutions will be opened is determined with a regulation prepared by the Ministry of National Education. The Special Education and Rehabilitation Centers are private Institutions but the classes for every child with report and individual education plan from RAM are completely covered by the government.

In **Macedonia** children with SEN, receive the same funding like their peers. Every parent pays a certain amount for their child to attend the preschool. Children with SEN do not receive additional financing in order to satisfy their special needs. Parents pay for all the extra

work with their child. The municipality distributes the financial means for the preschools but the finances are received thru the budget of the country. Teachers do not receive accessible teaching materials and often have to prepare them for themselves.

### 3.3 Identification of Special Education Needs (SEN)

Identification and tools of identification of the special needs for the preschool education are one of the most important aspects in preschool inclusion. The aspects that were of interest to our study are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Identification of SEN in Sweden, Germany, Holland, Turkey and Macedonia**

Country	Early identification	Unified state assessment	Municipality or school based assessment	Parent consent
Sweden	√	X	√	√
Germany	√	X	√	√
Holland	√	√	√	√
Turkey	√	√	X	√
Macedonia	√	√	X	√

Several aspects of the identification are taken in consideration for this study. First of all, our study aimed at discovering whether in all the countries there are services for early intervention that enable early identification of children with SEN. One of our fields of interest is also whether there is a unified assessment protocol or each school or municipality makes the assessment in a different manner. Also we were interested whether the parents are involved in the process of identification.

In **Sweden** the local municipalities are independent in terms of organization and there are different ways of dealing with the work of identifying and investigating individual needs for special support. Parents must give their approval when more long-term or detailed investigations need to be completed. Municipal childcare, pre-primary activities, compulsory schooling, after-school centers and youth centers are often part of the same organization with a common school-board. It is common practice to provide for the pupils' needs in close co-operation with their parents. The Education Act (Skolagg, 2010, p. 800) states the importance of the parents' participation in the planning of pupils' education.

The **German** procedure of determining special educational needs comprises establishing the individual need for support as well as deciding on the course of education and the place of support. The responsibility for the procedure lies with the preschool supervisory authorities. Standardized achievement tests to assess pupils' performance or learning development in certain subjects or grades are not given at Land level. In general the criteria for identification of SEN are more or less similar for early years education.

In **Holland**, in the identification of the special educational needs two different assessment procedures can be distinguished: one for pupils falling under the so-called Together to School Again policy (see development of integration/inclusion) and the other for pupils possibly eligible for special education placement. Under the first policy assessing pupils with learning difficulties and mild mental impairments is basically the responsibility of the classroom teacher. A next step would be to refer the pupil for assessment to a regionally operating assessment team. These teams, which generally comprise a psychologist, physician, social worker and experienced special needs teachers, assess pupils in order to decide on the support needed. Parents' permission is required for such an assessment (European Agency, 2013).

In **Turkey** education for children with disabilities begins at an early age. In special Guidance and Research Centers (Rehberlik ve Araştırma Merkezi-RAM) where Special monitoring and evaluation team is identifying the individuals who require special education, examines, diagnoses and recommends the most suitable educational environment support, offering guidance and counseling services. This team is making individual program for every child and sending it to Special Education and Rehabilitation Centers (Özel Eğitim Rehabilitasyon Merkezi). At the same time, the child with disabilities is visiting regular pre-school institution, private or government, according to parent's choice.

In **Macedonia** until recently, the assessment of the special needs was done in the Institution of Mental Health where a team of professionals examined the child and determined his/hers disabilities. This assessment was made based on the medical model of assessment. There is only one such institution and it is located in the capitol. The recommendation for assessment is given by the resident pediatricians, the staff working in the kindergartens or on initiative of the parents. During this year several ministries formed a working group with the purpose to upgrade the procedure of identification. The proposed model will include 8 regional centers for identification and the assessment will be based on the functional model of disability.

### 3.4 Teacher training

Aspects of the training and faculty education of professional for working with children with special needs are shown in table 5.

**Table 5. Teacher training for working with children with SEN in Sweden, Germany, Holland, Turkey and Macedonia**

Country	Bachelor degree in pre-school education	Bachelor degree in Special Education and Rehabilitation	Master degree in Special Needs Education
Sweden	√	X	√
Germany	√	X	√
Holland	√	X	√
Turkey	√	√	√
Macedonia	√	√	√

**Sweden** in its bill 'Top of the class – new teacher education programs (2010), the Government proposed that the degree of Bachelor/Master of Education should be replaced by four new professional degrees: a degree in pre-school education, a degree in primary school education, a degree in subject education and a degree in vocational education. The Postgraduate Diploma in Special Needs Training is extended to include specialisations for deafness or hearing impairments, vision impairments, serious language impairments and learning disabilities.

In **Germany**, for professionals to gain competencies to work with children with special needs, they need to finish basic teacher training and training for special education that they can receive via:

- A basic course of study: it is possible to study Special Needs Education at university as part of initial training by passing the First and Second State Examination; this is

basically divided into two stages: a course of higher education and practical pedagogic training; or

- An additional follow-up course of study subsequent to other teacher training courses.

In the **Netherlands** it takes four years to gain a mainstream teaching qualification. Primary school teachers study at institutions of higher education. They are trained to teach all curriculum subjects, but also a specialist subject. The initial teacher training includes an introduction to educating pupils with special needs. Current government policy requires more knowledge of educating special needs pupils within teacher training, but the program is oversubscribed and adding special needs program is not easy.

In **Turkey** there is three types of staff working with children with disabilities in Turkey:

- Special Educators- Özel Eğitim –mostly clinically oriented, they are working in the Guidance and Research Centers (RAM).
- Teachers for different type of disabilities- such as Teacher for Children with Intellectual Disability (Zihinsel Engelliler Öğretmen), Teacher for Hearing Impaired Children (İşitme Engelliler Öğretmen), Teacher for Visual Impaired Children (Görme Engelliler Öğretmen) est. They are working in special schools or special classes in regular schools.
- Certified Special Educators- Sertificali Özel Eğitim- which is staff made by the need of more Special Educators. This group of staff has finished Faculty for Teachers and attended short course for working with children with disabilities as additional qualification.

In **Macedonia** professionals that will work in the field of special education and rehabilitation are educated on the Institute of Special Education and Rehabilitation on the Faculty of Philosophy. In order to work with persons with disabilities on any level (preschool, primary, secondary schools) they need to get a bachelor degree in special education and rehabilitation. After receiving this degree they are competent to work with persons with different types of disabilities (deaf, blind, intellectually disabled and children with autism, and children with physical impairments). Graduates can continue their education on the master level where the Institute offers narrow specializations for all the above mentioned categories.

#### **4. Discussion of results and verification of hypotheses**

Regarding the basic hypothesis  $H_0$  . European countries have more advanced and developed inclusive practices than Macedonia and Turkey on the basis of the desk-analysis; we can say that this hypothesis is **rejected**. Our research showed that Turkey and Macedonia, although they are not member states of EU, have well developed inclusive practices. Sweden and Holland have a long tradition of early intervention and early identification of children with special needs, and so does Germany. But early identification, with its tools and parameters is well set and structured in Macedonia and Turkey. The legislation is somewhat problematic in all countries. Sweden has the best regulations regarding equal access to all, but in none of the countries there is no law for inclusion, which would regulate all the issues from preschool to high education for persons with disabilities. Financing is different in different countries and the largest problem, in this field in Macedonia is the free access to adapted technical aids. The teacher training is also different in different countries, but we can freely state that the education policies in Macedonia and Turkey are better than in the analyzed EU countries, because Macedonia and Turkey provide larger scale of competencies during the gaining of the bachelor degree.

Regarding legislation and the inclusive practices connected to the preschool education of children with special needs, the practices are different in different countries. In **Sweden**



nearly all children visit mainstream preschools (Papke, 2009). Pupils that need special support have right to specialist provision. The technical aids for the children with special needs are provided by the state and can be found in the regional municipalities (European Agency, 2013). The right of disabled children to education and training appropriate to their needs in **Germany** is stated in the Basic Law. In Saxony-Anhalt, all children with special educational needs attend inclusive day care facilities. In Berlin, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein less than 10 percent of children with special needs are taken care of in special day care facilities. In Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Lower Saxony and Saxony on the other hand, more than 50 percent of all children with special education needs attend special facilities (UNESCO-Kommission, 2014). The responsibility for **early years education** resides mainly with the Ministry for Social Affairs. The phase of early intervention is not part of the public school system. Regarded on federal state level in Germany nearly 80% of all children with SEN in preschool age visit inclusive kindergartens (Papke, 2009). In **Holland**, one of the notable things is the freedom of education (Thijs, van Leeuwen, & Zandbergen, 2012, p. 26). As a result there are both publicly run and privately run schools in the Netherlands. Some publicly run schools base their teaching on specific educational ideas, such as the Montessori, Jenaplan or Dalton method. In 2001 the government approved the Basic Childcare Provision Bill (WBK) and submitted it to the Council of State. The aim is to provide adequate facilities throughout the Netherlands, with appropriate educational standards. In **Turkey** the access to all pre-school institutions is compulsory for children with disabilities according to Special Education Services Regulations from the Ministry of Education (Resmi Gazete Yönetmenlik, 2012). All individuals who are requiring special education, according to their interest, desires and in accordance with the competencies and skills, can benefit from the special education services. In **Macedonia** children with special needs can attend private or state preschools. In some cities in Macedonia, the municipalities hire special educators and rehabilitators that identify and work with children with SEN in all the preschools in that particular municipality. The law for Child Protection clearly states that the preschool can hire a pedagogue, psychologist, social worker, medical doctor, dentist, speech therapist or a special educator and rehabilitator (as part of the professional team in the preschool) and the choice lies within the preschool and the municipality.

Regarding the **first hypothesis** we can say that it is **confirmed**. Sweden has the best legislation regarding the preschool inclusive education considering the open policy regarding education for all.

Regarding the **second hypothesis** - Financing of the preschool education of children with special needs is better managed in the EU countries than in Turkey and Macedonia, we can say that it is **partially confirmed**.

In **Sweden** an amount of money is granted and follows each pupil to whatever school they choose, either municipal or independent. A school that receives grants from the municipality is not entitled to collect school fees. Pre-school fees are linked to the family's income. In **Germany** the methods of financing education differ from Land to Land. Decisions on the funding of education are taken at all three levels, but over 90% of the funds are provided by the Länder and the local authorities. As a rule, organising bodies of both voluntary sector and public child and youth welfare services receive financial support from the Länder for the material and staffing costs of the Kindergärten (European Agency, 2013). In the **Netherlands** there is a 'back-pack' policy: pupils take the funding with them to the school of their choice. There are discussions about an alternative funding model because the way of funding can influence the development of inclusive education as well. Pupil-bound budgeting (Thijs, van Leeuwen, & Zandbergen, 2012, p. 10), seems to have some clear disadvantages. In **Turkey** The stay in private kindergartens is covered by the parents. In the

government kindergartens families pay a certain amount to have their children benefit from preschool education. The goal of preschool education is to help children develop physically, mentally and individually, and develop their ability to use language and prepare them for primary school. Where, and according to what priorities, the preschool educational institutions will be opened is determined with a regulation prepared by the Ministry of National Education. The Special Education and Rehabilitation Centers are private Institutions but the classes for every child with report and individual education plan from RAM are completely covered by the government. In **Macedonia** the stay in the preschools is covered by government funding and parent fees. The stay in the private preschools is far more expensive and parents pay that sum in total. There is no individual funding of the preschoolers and there are no additional funds for the children's special needs. Children with special needs, on the other hand receive some finances according to the Law for Social Protection (only if their disability is medium to severe).

Regarding the **third hypothesis** - Identification and instruments of identification of the children with special needs is well developed in all countries, considering is one of the crucial aspects of the special education and rehabilitation science, our research showed that it is **confirmed**.

In **Sweden** in 2011, 82,6 % of all children aged 6-9 attended organized childcare, of all children aged 10-12, 16,9 % attended organized childcare either municipal or independent. The need for special support can often be identified before the child enters school age. The head is responsible for the existence of forums for consultation and information and that consultation obligations are fulfilled. In **Germany** assessment is carried out by the teacher in charge of lessons, who is educationally responsible for his or her decision. Each pupil's performance or development is set out in a twice-yearly report in the middle and at the end of the school year. Continuous assessment of performance for pupils with SEN takes place in special schools in a similar form to that of general schools. In **Holland** generally the assessment consists of examining somatic/medical aspects, cognitive development, specific developmental aspects (language development, communication, concentration, motivation, etc.), social-emotional development (behavior, emotional stability, independence, etc.), as well as profiling the family situation, neighborhood and/or cultural background. The emphasis in the assessment depends on the reason for referral and the pupil's impairments. Assessment teams try to formulate the findings not only in terms of eligibility, but also in terms of educational planning. In **Turkey** determination of the child's special educational needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation by the team, as much as possible, by using home observations and development scales. Educational diagnostic, monitoring and evaluation is done by teams review and evaluation studies, repeated at least every six months. Which family education services, child and family services will be chosen and what kind of support will be used from these services, together with the educational diagnosis, monitoring and evaluation is determined by the team. The families are also informed and encouraged for the educational games, toys, toy libraries; required specialized training that enables children to express themselves, free games and educational books on topics such as entertainment areas. In **Macedonia** the assessment is done in the Center for Mental Health. The centers for early intervention or the child's pediatricians send the child to the Center for Mental Health. Here, a professional team consisted of a neuropsychologists, psychologists, special educators and rehabilitators, geneticists, speech therapists and other medical doctors (dependent on the disability) examine the child and make a medical assessment. After the examination they provide an "opinion" which serves the parents in their efforts to receive some additional funding. This "opinion" is not demanded in the preschools or the primary schools but sometimes it is necessary for the preparation of the IFP's.

Regarding the **fourth hypothesis** - Teacher training in all countries has a fundamentally good structure, considering the long education tradition in all of them, we can say that it is partially confirmed because Turkey and Macedonia educate professionals with more competencies to work with children with special needs. In Germany, Sweden and Holland, teacher training is consisted of basic teacher training and specialization. In Macedonia professionals must have a B.A. in special education and rehabilitation. In Turkey there are special educators which are clinically oriented, teachers for different types of disabilities, and certified special educators.

From 1 January 2013, the **Swedish** National Agency for Higher Education has ceased to exist as a public authority. Its operations have been transferred to two new public authorities: the Swedish Higher Education Authority Universitetskanslersämbetet and the Swedish Council for Higher Education Universitets- och högskolerådet. In **Germany** the course includes the study of educational science and subject related studies in at least one or two subject areas and in special education. About half of the course is devoted to the study of special education, while the other half is devoted to educational science and subject-related studies at an approximate ratio of 2:3. In some Länder it is compulsory to do a course in the teaching area of inclusion. In the **Netherlands** although supplementary training for teachers in special education is optional, the majority of special teachers follow a two year, part time training (Thijs, van Leeuwen, & Zandbergen, 2012, p. 36). Although not obligatory, a growing number of mainstream teachers have a special education certificate. By statutory legislation, it is assured that training of teachers is oriented towards the requirements of inclusive education (Fanchamps, den Otter, Siebelink, & Haccou, 2011, p. 12). In **Turkey** the staff working with children with disabilities in kindergartens and other pre-school institutions is mostly licensed Pre-school Teachers (Okulöncesi Öğretmen) which are not going to additional courses because they have exams about special pre-school education during their studies. In **Macedonia** on the Faculty of Philosophy, on the Institute of Special Education and Rehabilitation, there is a four year bachelor course in Special Education and Rehabilitation. There are no specific subjects for inclusion because the inclusive procedures are a structural part of almost all of the subjects of the curriculum. There is only one subject oriented strictly towards inclusion-“Preparation of IEP’s”. The institute offers a master course for inclusive education. The subject “Inclusive education” is an optional course on the Institutes of pedagogy, psychology and philosophy and almost all of the teaching faculties.

## 5. Recommendations

The purpose of this paper was to explore policies and practices regarding preschool education in different countries and to give recommendations for implementation of the best policies and practices in our Macedonian context. Some important steps towards this include (UNESCO, 2009):

- Mobilizing opinion on the right to education for everybody;
- Reforming legislation to support inclusive education in line with international conventions, declarations and recommendations;
- Supporting local capacity-building to promote development towards inclusive education;
- Developing ways to measure the impact of inclusive and quality education;
- The term inclusive education needs to be further clarified and adopted by educators, governmental and non-governmental organizations, policy-makers and social actors;
- Long-term sustainable policies of economic and social development need to take inclusive education into account;
- Regional and national dialogues are needed to ensure public understanding, awareness and support of policies;

- Early childhood interventions should be seen as a sustainable way to guarantee the right to education for all children from the start;
- National legislation should be changed and revised to incorporate notions of inclusive education;
- Implementation of policy and laws should be promoted and enforced;
- Budgetary allocations for inclusive education should be equitable, transparent, accountable and efficient.

Legislation in Macedonia should enable equal access to all with a new education bill that will provide additional financing for children with SEN like in Turkey or Holland and Sweden. Identification tools should be modified following newest trends, and finally the medical model of assessment should be changed with the functional model of assessment. Regarding teacher training we can use the good practices in Turkey especially in the field of the clinically oriented special educators.

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