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# GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE BASELINE STUDY

**General Overview of the Baseline study results on the state-of-art in the field  
of support for gifted and talented pupils and their teachers**

**TURKEY – CZECH REPUBLIC – GERMANY - ITALY**

**Project:** STRATEACH (Strategies for Talented and Gifted Pupils' Teachers)

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This Baseline Study has been conducted within a European project called **“Strategies for Gifted and Talented Pupils’ Teachers” (STRATEACH)** funded by the ERASMUS+ programme. The participating partners are: **Gazi University (Turkey), EDUcentrum (Czech Republic), Ländliche Erwachsenenbildung Thüringen (Germany)** and **The European Pole of Knowledge (Italy)**.

The main purpose of this Baseline Study was to **analyse the overall system of gifted and talented pupils’ care with focus on pre-school and primary education in each of the partner countries**. The Baseline Study served as a point of departure for further research and development of new strategies and training support for pre-school and primary school teachers.

The Baseline Study consisted of five chapters that examined the current system, laws, regulations, programmes, practices, strategies and research related to the main topic from different perspectives.

## 1. Understanding and definitions of the terms “talent” and “gift”

The **first chapter** of the Study dealt with the terms “talent” and “gift” and each of the partner institutions analysed the understanding and common definitions which are used nationally. All partners agreed that there are numerous definitions and there is not a common understanding what a “talent” and “gift” or “giftedness” means.

In **Turkey**, there is no single definition for talented and gifted children available. It can be seen that the definitions of talented and gifted children in Turkey are mainly taken from Morelock, Report to the Congress United States, Terman and Renzulli. However, all the definitions intersect in the fact that the development of gifted and talented children differs from the average development of their peers. Together with this, terms such as “gifted and talented”, “gifted”, “giftedness” “special talent” are used.

In the **Czech Republic**, there is no single definition of what a gift and talent mean. In general public discourse, giftedness often relates to general intellect predispositions and talent to a predisposition to a non-reasoning activity especially in the fields of sport or art. In the academic discourse, there are several definitions which use various criteria to establish what giftedness and talent exactly are and what is the difference between a gifted and talented child. The criteria include e.g. the different development to that of their peers or the ability to consciously develop their own skills.

In **Germany** the situation is very similar. Being gifted means to be intellectually gifted or highly skilled in the common language use and it is often associated with a surpassing intelligence. Gifted children are noticeable superior to peers in particular fields of their intellectual, artistic, motor active and social development. The gift of a child appears in different ways. Amongst them are: readiness of mind, well learning aptitude, spatial sense, high capacity of memory, ability to outstanding performance in many fields (e.g. natural science, language skills, logical reasoning), ability to cope with novel requirements in different fields and to manage new situations tasks and problems. The Thuringian education plan for children at the age of 0-10 defines giftedness in the following way: “Gifted children are children who are curiously and very active interested in their environment on a high stimulation level to acquire complex

knowledge and skills. They don't just perform productively and creatively by accomplishing requirements that stimulate primarily the mental intellectual development, but are also interested in art, music, technology, natural science and exercise."

The educational needs of gifted children have to be satisfied in an especial way, because they have their own distinctive learning pace, are addressed by and interested in different topics and questions.

In **Italy** there is not a clear distinction between both terms. The term "talent" is often considered in a sense of a "genius". In Italy few teachers and few psychologists know the term "giftedness". Probably, Federica Mormando is the first person who introduced the term "gifted" in Italy, to gather all children with high IQ (>130) but who are misunderstood by another peer and parent. In her book "The Gifted Children" she explains the difference between "talent" that can be learned and nurtured at school and "gift" which is essentially inborn and unteachable. However, intelligence is not considered to be a single defining criterion and there are many other theoretical models used in Italy in this particular field.

## 2. Laws and Regulations related to care for gifted and talented pupils

The **second chapter** was focused on analysis of laws and regulations that determine the care for gifted and talented pupils. Each partner institution described the most important legal documents that concern the GAT care in particular partner countries and there were also listed important institutions involved in GAT care.

We may observe that many regulations for gifted children were made in national legislation through laws, decree laws, regulations, guidelines and decisions **in Turkey**. As a result of these regulations, the right to education of gifted children have been provided and a variety of opportunities in terms of environmental and educational possibilities have been created. The analysis of the relevant legislation demonstrated that there are articles, which define and support gifted education. Several measures advantageous to the gifted and talented children have been provided for talented and gifted children, including accelerating strategies such as early start to formal education and grade skipping.

In the **Czech Republic**, the work with GAT children is regulated by Decree No. 73\_2005 Coll. The provisions regarding gifted and talented children stated in the legislation are further specified by a number of public ordinances. The key institution that contributes to the formulation of the policy regarding GAT pupils is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic (MSMT). The national policy as well as strategies towards the GAT pupils are also influenced by a number of public research institutes that focus on education. The main organisations of this type include National institute of education (NUV) or National institute for further education (NIDV).

**Germany** is a federal state and, as a result, all of the federal states bear their own responsibilities. That means, in the case of education, that each federal state generates its own school system and own kinds of schools. Furthermore, the compulsory school time to accomplish the general qualification for university entrance and the compulsory school time for primary school are diversely as well as the further education of school teachers. The Ministers of Education of the German federal states meet at conference of ministers of education to agree upon important guidelines and to pass resolutions. Generally they don't

include the pre-school area. More importance has been given to the support of gifted children since the publication of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in which Germany came off badly referring to the two upper competence levels.

The conference of the Ministers of Education passed a strategy to support especially high performing gifted pupils in summer 2015. There are existing guidelines referring to different aspects of support for gifted and talented pupils. Preferred approach to GAT pupils is based on individualisation. The individual support of gifted children is stipulated in the Thuringian constitution. The most important document that regulates the GAT care in Thuringia is the Thuringia school law.

In **Italy**, since 1977 the law n. 517 decrees that the Italian school should be inclusive. This law and all the following in this field are mostly directed to the inclusion of the students with disabilities or difficulties, so the gifted pupils' management is up to the teachers. In 2014, the National Institute of Education Investigation, Innovation and Research (INDIRE) constituted the first National Register of Excellences. There all listed all names of Italian "excellent" students. With legislative decree n°262/2007 the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR) established that all students with a score of 8/10 in all subjects in high school are "excellent" students.

### 3. National programmes and strategies for GAT care

The **third chapter** was focused on description of various programmes and different strategies that solve the care for gifted and talented pupils. All partners analysed different approaches, preventive measures and practices related to GAT care in early childhood and in primary education in particular countries.

In **Turkey** there is a Preschool Education Program that gives a general overview about possible adaption of teaching activities to meet educational needs of pre-school children. However, the actual implementation cannot be considered as successful. For primary school pupils there is a network of gifted education centres available, called BİLSEMs. This network enables students who were identified as talented and gifted (7 – 16 years) to attend project-based studies except their regular schools. The baseline study showed that, over the years during the Republic period, the importance given to the education of talented and gifted individuals has been increasing. Considering the levels of education, we may see that the approaches offering educational opportunities and different possibilities for talented and gifted children have been gradually increasing. When the implementations in terms of preschool education were analysed, it was observed that there are very few practices on local basis and the education of talented and gifted children is included in the integration education practices. In 2000 the Ministry of National Education published the "Preschool Education Programme" that included recommendations regarding possible adaptation of teaching activities for GAT children. As a result, talented and gifted children are trained through integration education at preschool period and through the implementations of Talented and Gifted Education Center at Primary Level. Some of the non-governmental organizations support gifted education under a single roof, exchanging vocational information, developing relationships with private and public bodies. At the turn of the Millennium, the issue of talented and gifted children started to be discussed in many areas and became the agenda topic in Turkey. Departments for the education of talented and gifted children were established at private and state universities and degree programmes were opened in the majority of these departments.

In the **Czech Republic** the care for gifted and talented children has not been systematised yet. The main national framework that solves the concept of support and development of gifted

children is the Talent Support and Development Framework (2014 – 2020). There is no support and tools for teachers in pre-school education that would enable them to work with gifted and talented children systematically. The situation in primary schools is better, however the training offer, information and material support is rather unsystematic and remains on a low level. There are a couple of online information spaces where teachers can search for more information about GAT issues. In general the information is rather unsystematic and particular organisations do not cooperate in providing interconnected information services.

In **Germany** (Thuringia) the Thuringian Ministry responsible for educational objectives and the Thuringian education plan 0-10 actuated a set of measures to support the promotion of gifted children. There are also other services and programmes that support the care for GAT pupils, their teachers and parents such as: further education of pedagogical staff, support systems and multi-professional teams, kindergarten and school concepts, diagnostic, specialist counselling for pedagogical staff, individual consultancy, support and supervision, creation of learning via enrichment, acceleration, formation of learning groups, extra-curricular activities etc. In Germany a working group is monitoring this process and providing recommendation. The topic of gifted and talented children is addressed both at national and at federal level.

In **Italy** the promotion of talent in the early years is supported by the National Program for preschool and primary school (2012). Unfortunately, it doesn't describe real strategies but only general guidelines. It emphasises the pedagogical principle of individualization and personalization but without describing any practice. There is no specific programme for GAT care in primary education, the educational autonomy of the schools allows them to arrange curricula and activities according to the students' needs. The main strategies that can be used in the primary schools to solve the GAT problematics are the acceleration and the enrichment.

#### 4. National researches in the field of GAT care

The **fourth chapter** summarised the main national research in particular partner countries.

In **Turkey** the analysis of the research on the preschool gifted and talented children, their teachers and parents demonstrated that this kind of research is less numerous than the research of the gifted and talented children at the primary and secondary schools' level.

In the **Czech Republic** there were three research studies conducted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (2009, 2011, 2013) and they mapped the key variables influencing the development of giftedness and the whole personality of gifted children.

In **Germany** the PISA study is significant and an initial point for researches, recommendations and regulations. There were several researches conducted taking in account different research aspects, such as mathematical and scientific understanding of pupils at the end of primary school, GAT support for immigrant children and the significant importance of motivation.

**In Italy**, in the region Veneto, there is an observatory on giftedness. This observatory researches different aspects of giftedness. It also collects data regarding the number of gifted children, their gender prevalence and information about persons that send these children for evaluation. Together with University of Pavia, and in particular their research centre for giftedness, called LabTalento, they run an online portal where teachers can share the best teaching practices.

*This was a short summary of the Baseline Study. If you wish to have a more detailed overview of the current state-of-art regarding GAT care in Turkey, Czech Republic, Germany and Italy, please study the full Baseline Study.*