



European Education Area Strategic Framework

Working Group Schools, Pathways to School Success sub-group

*Peer Learning Activity - Assessing learners' competences: policies and practices to support successful and inclusive education
Lisbon, 24-26 May 2023*

PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under its 2021-25 mandate, the **Working Group Schools, Pathways to School Success sub-group**¹, supports the implementation and follow-up of the Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success², which aims at reducing underachievement and early leaving from education and training and promoting well-being at school. The Working Group is contributing to high quality inclusive education across the **European Education Area** through its analysis of how more **inclusive, culturally responsive, and participatory** assessment practices can be supported, with the overall objective of improving all children's and young people's learning and well-being.

The Group focused its work on exploring the overarching question, **How can an effective alignment of formative and summative assessments of learners' key competences be ensured and supported and be more effectively integrated in teaching and learning?**³ Key themes which emerged during Working Group discussions were on the need to:

- Ensure a balanced and coherent approach to assessment of student competences
- Ensure that approaches to student assessments are "fit for purpose"
- Develop a long-term strategy to integrate new approaches to assessment across system

While education systems vary, they also face a number of **common challenges** to ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences. These include:

- *Parent resistance to change in assessment methods.*
- *Teacher resistance to new assessment policies and practices, based on practical challenges*
- *Challenges in ensuring consistent implementation of new assessment approaches across systems.*
- *Lack of attention to supporting learners' personal competences, such as social emotional learning, as well as to tools to assess their development.*
- *Few opportunities for learners and other stakeholders to share their experiences and views on assessment at policy or school and classroom levels.*

A **peer learning activity (PLA)** of the Group was held in Lisbon, 24 – 26 May 2023. The PLA was jointly hosted by the Portuguese Directorate-General for Education and Directorate-General for School Administration in Lisbon on 24-26 May 2023. Participants included DG EAC, Group representatives from Austria, Belgium (FR), Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden, as well as the European Training Foundation (ETF), Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE), European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLL), and the WG consultants.

¹ The Working Group comprises representatives from all Member States, EFTA and Candidate countries, international organisations, and stakeholder organisations.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H1209%2801%29&qid=1671106078506>

This report sets out **key messages to guide policy making at national and regional levels** on how to support effective classroom-based formative and summative assessment. The key messages aim to be relevant to and adaptable by all Member States, while also recognising that each education system has its own context, culture, and history. The report also includes **country and stakeholder examples** of policy development, provided by the Working Group Schools Members. These may offer inspiration for how these key messages can be developed in different contexts.

KEY MESSAGES FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY MAKERS

1) ENSURE A BALANCED AND COHERENT APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT COMPETENCES

- **Develop a clear, shared vision and aims for student learning, personal development, and well-being, elaborated through a collective process involving a broad set of internal and external school stakeholders.** This can provide a powerful foundation for change in schools, including the development of innovative learning environments and effective approaches to assessment of student competences.
- **Ensure coherence across the overall vision, curriculum, learning standards, and assessment (external and classroom-based, formative and summative).** If these elements are not coherent, it is impossible to have a clear view of student learning or to develop effective strategies for learning and school improvement. New approaches to assessment may be needed as school systems introduce competence-based curricula. Attention to coherence of curriculum and assessment approaches between primary and secondary education, as well as between secondary and university levels can facilitate learner transitions.
- **Ensure the core principles of inclusion, equity and participation are embedded in the design and implementation of effective assessment of student competences.** At classroom, school and policy levels, the meaningful inclusion of learners' voice on assessment practices is essential.
- **Establish effective communication channels and ensure the development of a shared vocabulary between and among policy makers and school leaders and teachers, parents, and students is essential (top-down/bottom-up; vertical communication).**
- **Encourage and facilitate communication and dialogue across networks and in schools (school and teacher professional networks, teacher educators and other education stakeholder groups), and among educators with learners and their parents to support implementation of new curricula and assessment, as well as innovation (horizontal communication).**

2) ENSURE THAT STUDENT ASSESSMENT APPROACHES ARE “FIT FOR PURPOSE”

- **Keep the focus on the process of student learning, development, and well-being, rather than solely on academic results.** Attention to helping all learners to develop and improve can support greater equity and inclusion.
- ⊖ **Disseminate high-quality research and proven good practices of classroom-based assessments that support equity and inclusion and put the learners’ at the centre of the assessment process, and which may inspire broader take-up across school systems.**
- **Develop assessment as an integrated part of teaching and learning processes.**³ Development should begin in initial teacher education (ITE) programmes, which should address assessment of competences to be developed in different subject areas, as well as transversal competences. Support for ongoing professional learning communities and other networks, as well as continuing professional development programmes to support teachers are also essential.
- **Encourage teachers to use a combination of assessment approaches, including standardised and alternative assessments, administered over time to support a more well-rounded view of student competence development.** Assessments that capture learners’ transversal competences, including for personal and social development, and for learning to learn are an important part of the mix.
- **Support teachers as professionals.** Trust in teachers’ professionalism is essential to acceptance of alternative, non-standardised assessments of learner competences. Scoring rubrics with criteria and training to support a shared understanding of levels can support greater reliability of alternative assessments, and support teacher professional development.
- **Invest in further research on effective formative assessment practices and how to adapt next steps in learning processes in classrooms.** Controlled studies can provide information on the impact of different approaches and support evidence-based practice. Qualitative research with learners may also provide further insight on how different learners experience formative assessment and can support inclusion. Classroom-based formative assessment can be used to identify different learners’ needs and tailor next steps in teaching and learning.
- **Invest in further research on new and more effective ways to report learners’ progress, and to maintain trust-based relationships with parents and learners.**

3) DEVELOP A LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO INTEGRATE NEW APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT ACROSS SYSTEMS

- **Ensure that long-term change strategies follow the overall vision for education (key message 1) and establish a clear plan for implementation and evaluation of change processes and**
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impact. Change strategies need to build on the existing national, regional, school education contexts and cultures.

- **Take a strategic approach to introducing changes over time and piloting and refining new assessment approaches in selected schools and school networks prior to introducing system-wide change.** Changes may also be introduced with a primary school cohort, and developed in later grades as they progress through school.
- **Support school leaders (school, department heads and other leaders) to lead whole school change involving all school staff, learners, parents, and other stakeholders to integrate new approaches to assessment of learner competences.** Leadership of collaborative school evaluation (internal and external) and school development plans is essential to effective change processes.
- **Ensure teacher autonomy to integrate new approaches to assessment and provide access to relevant professional learning opportunities as well as guidelines, tools and good practice exemplars – including practical approaches to integrating classroom assessment.** Teacher engagement in change processes and confidence in their ability to integrate new methods are essential to long-term change.
- **Ensure that teacher certification examinations, professional standards, teacher appraisal and school evaluations all require that teachers demonstrate competences related to classroom-based summative and formative assessment of learner competences.** Consistent emphasis on the need for teachers to develop their capacity to assess learner competences will also provide incentives for teacher educators (initial and continuing) to include assessment as a significant area for study and as part of their own teaching and learning approaches.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Under its 2021 – 25 mandate, the Working Group Schools, Pathways to School Success sub-group⁴, supports the implementation and follow-up of the Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success⁵, which aims at reducing underachievement and early leaving from education and training and promoting well-being at school. The Working Group has been exploring **how policy makers can support effective and inclusive whole-school approaches to integrating formative and summative assessment of learners' key competences in teaching and learning**. The Group has focused its attention on the need to renew and refocus learner assessment so that it is more coherent with aims for student competence development, and to develop long-term change strategies for change.

A peer learning activity (PLA) of the Group was held in Lisbon, 24 – 26 May 2023. The PLA was jointly hosted by the Portuguese Directorate-General for Education and Directorate-General for School Administration in Lisbon on 24-26 May 2023. Participants included DG EAC, Group representatives from Austria, Belgium (FR), Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden, as well as the European Training Foundation (ETF), Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE), European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLP), and the WG consultants.

This report summarises the main conclusions of the PLA. It sets out **key messages to guide policy making at national and regional levels** on how to support effective and inclusive classroom-based formative and summative assessment of learner competences and illustrates them with country examples. These key messages are set out as broad principles which may be adapted by diverse education systems as appropriate for their education context, governance structure, culture, and history. While the report is aimed at policy makers it may also be useful to any school education stakeholders concerned with supporting effective classroom-based assessment of learner competences.

This report was edited by Janet Looney (European Institute of Education and Social Policy), Gillian Kelly (Ecorys), Annalisa Cannoni and Oana Felecan (European Commission) in June 2023 with review and validation from the Working Group members.

⁴ The Working Group comprises representatives from all Member States, EFTA and Candidate countries, international organisations, and stakeholder organisations. It is one of the seven Working Groups of the strategic framework for the European Education Area, whose main objective is to promote mutual learning on policy reform of national education systems with a view to effectively contributing to the achievement of the European Education Area by 2025,

⁵ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H1209\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022H1209(01))

1. ASSESSING LEARNERS' COMPETENCES: POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The **2022 Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success** acknowledges the key role of assessment practices to support competence acquisition and ultimately ensure all learners can develop their full potential, irrespective of personal circumstances and socio-economic background. It invites Member States to “...**promote assessment practices that reflect and support personal learning needs and paths**, in particular by making extensive use of formative and continuous assessment, and by combining multiple digital and non-digital forms and tools that are **inclusive, culturally responsive, and participatory**”.

At the same time, **Member States are introducing new competence-based curricula**. With its emphasis on the application of knowledge in real life situations, competence-based teaching and learning represents a significant departure from content-only based approaches, and may require new approaches to classroom-based assessment. **The 2018 Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning**⁶, defines key competences as those competences all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employment, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, and active citizenship⁷. The Recommendation highlights that key competences include a range of knowledge, skills and attitudes which go well beyond what might be considered a traditional notion of only ‘academic’ knowledge as the dominant focus of school systems.

New assessment methods that capture a broader range of learning aims -- i.e., not only knowledge, but also the ability to use knowledge in different contexts -- as well as the learners’ personal and social development and well-being are needed. In addition to standardised tests, which can provide reliable measures of student progress toward learning aims across schools, alternative assessments such as portfolios or projects, which can capture transversal competences (e.g. problem-solving and critical thinking skills, creativity, ability to cooperate, and so on), are needed. These alternative assessments can also support a stronger focus on learning processes, and not just the learner’s grades or class ranking.

Evidence of student learning gathered in classroom assessments may be used not only to measure achievements, but also to identify and address different learners’ needs and support inclusion. The Working Group has stressed the importance for assessment to be inclusive. **Inclusive assessment** takes into account the needs of all learners, ensures that all take part in the assessment procedures and that the learning activities planned as a result are appropriate to each individual.⁸

Nevertheless, in many EU countries, there are challenges in convincing educational leaders (e.g., policy makers) and other stakeholders (e.g. parents and/or learners) to accept assessment approaches that place less emphasis on learners’ marks or class ranking. The Working Group has highlighted that both **mindsets and practices may need to change**.

⁶ Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning (2018/C 189/01).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Kefallinou, A. and Donnelly, V. (2016). “Implementing Inclusive Education: Issues”, *Bridging the Policy-Practice Gap. International Perspectives on Inclusive Education*, Vol. 8, pp. 209-227. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-36362016000008013>. See also Watkins, A. (Editor) (2007) *Assessment in Inclusive Settings: Key Issues for Policy and Practice*. Odense, Denmark: Euro

The Working Group has also highlighted that there needs to be greater focus on **developing an effective relationship between classroom-based formative and summative assessments**, rather than seeing them as one vs another. Research has shown that formative feedback focused on the learning process rather than the final product, and assessment practices which track progress over time, have been more effective at supporting learning than summative assessments alone⁹ and can also support inclusion and participation. Moreover, studies have found that the learner's active engagement in learning and assessment of themselves and their peers, which are core elements of effective formative assessment, can support learner progress¹⁰.

It should be noted that the Working Group has focused its attention on **classroom-based formative and summative assessment of learner competences**, and has chosen not to reflect on the relationship between classroom-based and external summative assessments. However, the Working Group has acknowledged the influence external summative assessment can have on teaching, learning and assessment practices at classroom level, as well as on equity and inclusion. There is a significant body of studies highlighting the potential negative impact of external high-stakes assessments (e.g. school leaving and university entrance examinations) on teaching and learning (e.g. 'teaching to the test', coaching)^{11 12}, as well as on inclusion¹³, particularly at secondary school levels.¹⁴ At the same time, less attention has been paid to evidence that in schools and classrooms that favour classroom-based formative assessment to support learning and inclusion, results on external high stakes assessments may be as good or better.^{15 16}

The purpose of the Working Group meetings, seminar, and peer learning activity (PLA) was to examine more deeply, and within specific country contexts, **how to ensure coherence across the overall vision for education, aims for student learning and well-being, and classroom-based formative and summative assessment practices; and, how to embed formative assessment in everyday educational practices**, both at primary and secondary levels. Working Group members have been invited to discuss policies and practices to support successful and inclusive education with regards to assessment in their own country contexts. These different meetings have provided the opportunity to explore the **main enablers, as well as the obstacles** to implementing effective classroom assessment of learner competences in different contexts and ways to address them.

⁹ Please see the Concept Note on "Learners' assessment policies and practices to support inclusive education" for detailed summaries of research on this topic.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Koretz, D. (2005). "Alignment, High Stakes, and the Inflation of Test Scores", University of California, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), Los Angeles

¹² Popham, W.J. (2002). "Right Task, Wrong Tools", American School Board Journal, Vol. 189, No. 2, p. 18-22.

¹³ (Davies and Elliott, 2012). UNICEF (2012) criticises the traditional systems of assessment, stating that they 'typically utilise standardized achievement test scores as the sole indicator of success for both students and schools, and ...prioritise excellence at the expense of equity' (p. 75).

¹⁴ Koretz, D. (2005). "Alignment, High Stakes, and the Inflation of Test Scores", University of California, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), Los Angeles.

¹⁵ Kingston, N. M. and Nash, B. (2011). Formative assessment: A meta-analysis and a call for research. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 30(4), 28–37.

¹⁶ William, D., Lee, C., Harrison, C., and Black, P. J. (2004). Teachers developing assessment for learning: Impact on student achievement. *Assessment in Education: Principles Policy and Practice*, 11(1), 49–65.

2. KEY THEMES AND COMMON CHALLENGES

The lead question for this PLA was: **How can an effective alignment of formative and summative assessments of learners' key competences be ensured and supported and be more effectively integrated in teaching and learning?"**

Key themes which emerged during Working Group discussions were on the need to:

- Ensure a balanced and coherent approach to assessment of student competences
- Ensure that approaches to student assessments are "fit for purpose"
- Develop a long-term strategy to integrate new approaches to assessment across systems

While education systems vary, at a general level, the Working Group identified a number of common **challenges** to ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences. These include:

- *Parent resistance to change in assessment methods.* Parents frequently prefer to focus only on their children's marks, rather than on more detailed formative feedback. This may be based on their own experiences in school and with knowledge-based - rather than competence-based - curricula, and the 'traditional' emphasis on marks and class rankings. Parents may be unaware of the benefits of assessments that focus on the process of learning or may protest school efforts to reduce the frequency of marks and of summative testing for their children. They may fear negative impact on subsequent educational steps if they do not have grades or numerical marks. In some cases, parents may lack time and/or resources to devote attention to more detailed assessment reporting or they may not be fluent in the language of schooling.
- *Teacher resistance to new assessment policies and practices.* Resistance is frequently tied to practical challenges of integrating new competence-based curricula and assessments that may require more advance planning and lesson time. Teachers may face large classes, staff and resource shortages, or overloaded curricula. Teachers at secondary level may feel the need to 'teach to' high stakes assessments, rather than broader curricular aims. Difficulties in using formative assessment to identify and address diverse learner needs are reflected in ongoing inequity of learner outcomes, including high levels of grade retention in some countries.
- *Challenges in ensuring consistent implementation of new assessment approaches across systems,* signalling a need for support to schools and teachers so that they may further develop their assessment literacy and competences.
- *Lack of attention to supporting social emotional learning and development, as well as to tools to assess their development.* This may lead to lower levels of attention to this competence area.
- *Few opportunities for learners and other stakeholders to share their experiences and views on assessment at policy or school and classroom levels.* Students and parents, for example, may resist the introduction of new assessment approaches that are not what they expected or believe support their future learning prospects. In some cases, they may protest that formative assessment is too much work, or they may not be aware of how it can support their learning.

The next chapter present the key messages for national and regional policy development, following the three broad themes outlined above. These broad themes – or principles -- can guide strategies in diverse education systems while recognising that each system will need to tailor its response to

its particular context and needs. The key messages are illustrated by brief country and stakeholder examples.

3. KEY MESSAGES FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY MAKERS

3.1 ENSURE A BALANCED AND COHERENT APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT COMPETENCES

Key messages for policy makers:

- **Develop a clear, shared vision and aims for student learning, personal development, and well-being, elaborated through a collective process involving a broad set of internal and external school stakeholders.** This can provide a powerful foundation for change in schools, including the development of innovative learning environments and effective approaches to assessment of student competences.
- **Ensure coherence across the overall vision, curriculum, learning standards, and assessment (external and classroom-based, formative and summative).** If these elements are not coherent, it is impossible to have a clear view of student learning or to develop effective strategies for learning and school improvement. New approaches to assessment may be needed as school systems introduce competence-based curricula. Attention to coherence of curriculum and assessment approaches between primary and secondary education, as well as between secondary and university levels can facilitate learner transitions.
- **Ensure the core principles of inclusion, equity and participation are embedded in the design and implementation of effective assessment of student competences.** At classroom, school and policy levels, the meaningful inclusion of learners' voice on assessment practices is essential.
- **Establish effective communication channels and ensure the development of a shared vocabulary between and among policy makers and school leaders and teachers, parents, and students is essential (top-down/bottom-up; vertical communication).**
- **Encourage and facilitate communication and dialogue across networks and in schools (school and teacher professional networks, teacher educators and other education stakeholder groups), and among educators with learners and their parents to support implementation of new curricula and assessment, as well as innovation (horizontal communication).**

Classroom-based learner assessment sits within broader frameworks setting aims for student learning, curricula, and external student assessments and school evaluations which measure attainment of learning aims. **Coherence** across these different components allows both systems and schools to track the success of student learning, as well as to enhance inclusion, equity and participation.

As countries introduce competence-based curricula, new approaches to assessment that more effectively measure student learning and development are needed. In addition to standardised tests, which can provide reliable measures of student progress toward learning aims, alternative assessments that can capture more complex, higher-order competences (e.g., critical thinking skills, creativity, ability to cooperate, and so on) are needed. Multiple assessments (both formative and summative), administered over time, can provide a more complete picture of student learning and development.

In classrooms, assessment should also be developed as an integrated part of the learning process. Classroom learning activities, such as dialogues and discussions or student project work, as well as tests provide opportunities to elicit evidence of student learning and understanding. Results may be used formatively -- to plan next steps for learning -- or summatively -- to assign marks, support decisions on promotion, and so on.

In **Portugal**, a 2018 reform introduced competence-based curriculum which includes a focus on critical thinking, problem solving, personal development and autonomy, awareness of global problems. In addition, Decree-Law number 55/ 2018¹⁷, which provides schools and teachers autonomy and curricular flexibility, recognises formative assessment as a main method for gathering evidence on student learning in classrooms. The law is intended to reinforce policies that promote equal access to school, equal opportunities, and educational success. Schools have the freedom and liberty to innovate as they implement these approaches.

In **Austria**, several steps have been taken to develop a coherent approach to student assessment and school evaluation. Legislation and curricula have been developed to create greater parity between summative and formative assessment in schools. At primary school level, learners receive formative feedback as well as numerical grades. Recent policy developments have focused on early diagnosis of learning needs, standardised tests along with the provision of tools to support assessment (e.g. rubrics to guide formative feedback). Most importantly, the Quality Management System for Schools, including the Quality Framework for Schools support both school evaluation and student assessment processes.

In **Belgium** (French Community), the Ministry has promoted classroom-based formative assessment since 1997. The Pact for Excellence in Teaching, first introduced in 2015, highlights the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences. It includes general objectives for learning, guidance standards, reference guidelines for pre-primary, primary and secondary education, and indicators to monitor implementation. Recent changes due to the Pact include a strengthened and extended curricula for common core subjects (until grade 9 -- 3rd year of secondary education -- instead of grade 8) that focuses on polytechnics, thanks to the introduction of new subjects such as manual, technical, technological and digital training, or on education in arts and culture. Other changes include a reviewed curricula for all common core subjects, and new pedagogical models, including a progressive approach to learning difficulties involving regular diagnostic and formative assessments as well as widespread use of differentiation. Beginning 1st September 2023, Belgian learners in 1st through 4th grades will

¹⁷Decree-Law no. 54/2018, July 6. Establishes the legal regime of inclusive education, available at: <https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/decreto-lei/54-2018-115652961>.

receive periods of reinforced supervision- known as “AP period”¹⁸. In addition, initial teacher education will be extended from three to four years. The Pact also stimulates self-orientation and entrepreneurship among students. To better support teachers in this profound transition of their profession, the French Community developed e-classe.be, an educational resources platform that helps teachers with modern, imaginative and reliable tools, adapted to each level of education and to each subject, and in accordance with the new curriculum.

Croatia has introduced multiple initiatives to support effective and inclusive assessment of learners’ key competences in schools. These include a new comprehensive curriculum for primary and secondary education, new and improved textbooks and new legislation to support the transition towards digital education. In addition, Croatia has introduced policies to improve teachers’ profiles, opportunities for professional development, their work environments in schools, and pay levels.

In **France**, various policies on classroom assessment have been introduced over time. These include a framework of laws introduced in 2005¹⁹, 2013²⁰ and 2019²¹. Assessment is included as a priority in the ministerial 2022-2025 masterplan²² for teachers and staff continuous training. Teachers have access to numerous guidelines published on the Eduscol website (national online platform for accompanying teachers), and in circulars, in the curricula (to varying degrees depending on the subject) and in the 2013 reference framework of professional competences for teaching and education professions²³. These different frameworks allow teachers relative freedom to conduct classroom assessment as they see fit. While this has led to positive developments in classrooms, especially in pre-school and primary education, assessment in the classroom could be better coordinated within schools and more coherent in terms of aims, types, methods and frequency. Moreover, formative assessment remains underdeveloped in upper secondary schools, with assessment of learning taking precedence over assessment for learning. Formative and summative assessments are frequently confused within a single mark in France. To address this, a policy introduced in 2021 now requires that upper secondary schools are required to explain their assessment approaches.

Building teachers’ assessment literacy and competences is essential and should be included in initial teacher education – as highlighted in the key messages.

Working group participants noted that **broad stakeholder engagement in policy development** can strengthen buy-in to changes, readiness to engage with challenges of implementation, and long-term policy sustainability. Stakeholders may include learners, parents, teachers, school leaders and other school staff; engaged members of the community. Support for **learners’ voice in assessment processes** has been highlighted in the research and by the Working Group as being particularly important. At the same time, Working Group members noted that these aspects are underdeveloped. At policy level,

¹⁸ Circulaire 8936 du 01/06/2023 : Informations relatives à la mise en œuvre du tronc commun durant l'année scolaire 2023-2024 : http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=26823&do_id=9191

¹⁹ Law no. 2005-380 of 23 April 2005 d'orientation et de programme pour l'avenir de l'école a pour objet d'adapter le système éducatif aux changements de la société et à la transformation du public scolaire.

²⁰ Law no 2013-595 of 8 2013 d'orientation et de programmation pour la refondation de l'école de la république

²¹ Law no.2019-791 of 26 July 2019 pour une école de confiance.

²² [Schéma directeur de la formation continue des personnels du ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de la Jeunesse et des Sports - 2022-2025](#)

²³ [Référentiel des compétences professionnelles des métiers du professorat et de l'éducation](#)

there is still work to do to empower stakeholder engagement in design, implementation and evaluation of policies. Engagement may occur through online and in-person public consultations, as well as feedback to inform formative evaluations of policies underway is important. In schools and classrooms, more attention is needed on empowering learners in assessment practices, so that they may become protagonists of their own learning.

3.2 ENSURE THAT STUDENT ASSESSMENT APPROACHES ARE “FIT FOR PURPOSE”

Key messages for policy makers:

- **Keep the focus on the process of student learning, development, and well-being, rather than solely on academic results.** Attention to helping all learners to develop and improve can support greater equity and inclusion.
- ⊖ **Disseminate high-quality research and proven good practices of classroom-based assessments that support equity and inclusion and put the learners at the centre of the assessment process, and which may inspire broader take-up across school systems.**
- **Develop assessment as an integrated part of teaching and learning processes.**²⁴ Development should begin in initial teacher education (ITE) programmes, which should address assessment of competences to be developed in different subject areas, as well as transversal competences. Support for ongoing professional learning communities and other networks, as well as continuing professional development programmes to support teachers are also essential.
- **Encourage teachers to use a combination of assessment approaches, including standardised and alternative assessments, administered over time to support a more well-rounded view of student competence development.** Assessments that capture learners’ transversal competences, including for personal and social development, and for learning to learn are an important part of the mix.
- **Support teachers as professionals.** Trust in teachers’ professionalism is essential to acceptance of alternative, non-standardised assessments of learner competences. Scoring rubrics with criteria and training to support a shared understanding of levels can support greater reliability of alternative assessments, and support teacher professional development.
- **Invest in further research on effective formative assessment practices and how to adapt next steps in learning processes in classrooms.** Controlled studies can provide information on the impact of different approaches and support evidence-based practice. Qualitative research with learners may also provide further insight on how different learners experience formative assessment and can support inclusion. Classroom-based

formative assessment can be used to identify different learners' needs and tailor next steps in teaching and learning.

- **Invest in further research on new and more effective ways to report learners' progress, and to maintain trust-based relationships with parents and learners.**

There are multiple types of and purposes for learners' assessment. Whether an assessment is fit for purpose depends on whether the evidence gathered supports inferences about what students know—as well as the interpretation and use of results. Classroom assessments focused on student learning outcomes need to provide sufficient detail to support decisions on next steps for teaching and learning (a formative use) or to assign marks or make decisions on promotion (a summative use). Assessments of learner competences will need to include tasks that can provide evidence of the reasoning processes and understanding.

Working Group members highlighted that there is a need to shift various stakeholders' mindsets that assessments are primarily intended to assign marks toward a view that it may also support learning. Sharing evidence on the benefits of formative assessment in helping all learners to improve and achieve may help influence views.

In classrooms, new approaches to assessment are also needed to balance dual goals of summative and formative assessment (sometimes described, respectively, as assessment *of* and assessment *for* learning). Multiple forms of assessment, administered over time, can provide a more well-rounded view of learner progress and development. Assessments to support tracking of personal (including social and emotional) competences are also needed.

Malta has introduced several new policies and frameworks to support effective classroom formative assessment. These include a framework setting out learning outcomes and encouraging teachers to use a range of assessment procedures when assessing students. A new system supports weighting of competence-based assessments. Education psychologists conduct assessments of students' social emotional learning.

In **Slovenia**, for more than a decade the [Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo](#) ((National Educational Institute) has been implementing various projects to support and enhance formative and summative assessment within the mandatory curricula. Slovenia is currently in the process of preparing the National Programme of Education by 2033. A working group plans to develop guidelines and strategic goals for education, focusing also on learning, teaching, knowledge assessment and grading to support inclusion.

Stakeholders in **Sweden** pay significant attention to learner grades- as a basis for eligibility and selection to upper secondary school and higher education. While the curriculum stipulates that teachers should monitor pupils' progress through continuous assessment, such practices, including formative assessment, are not always sufficiently implemented in practice. A number of recent policies have been implemented in Sweden. These include national tests and assessment support being digitalised, the reading-writing-mathematics guarantee, 'knowledge requirements' being changed to grading criteria; and placing more focus on subject grades,

which provides more time for teachers and students before the final grades are set. Some of these policies can have a positive impact on formative assessment. For example, the reading-writing-mathematics guarantee provides for the pupil's knowledge in Swedish and mathematics to be assessed in preschool class and year 1 by using national assessment materials. If the teacher sees that a pupil shows an indication of not achieving the requirements, a special assessment must be carried out and extra support put in place, and followed up, if necessary.

Steiner Waldorf schools have taken an in-depth look at the core curriculum and are now in the process of developing digital tools to support schools, particularly to support formative assessment. The project has paid particular attention to the child's learning journey in different subjects and developed learning descriptors. The project has led to the development of learning opportunities (and not just learning outcomes) in all subjects across the curricula, and these are embedded in a digital tool. Teachers may choose their content and identify the level of skills and competences that go along with those.

Working Group members noted significant resistance of stakeholders to decreasing the frequency of summative assessments and marks and increasing formative feedback for learners. This is especially the case at secondary school levels, where there is pressure to prepare learners for high stakes school leaving and university entrance examinations.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that formative assessment can support better outcomes on summative tests (e.g., Kingston et al., in a randomised large scale control trial scale control trial, found that formative assessment is the most effective approach to improving learner results on high stakes tests).²⁵ At the same time, teacher effectiveness in responding to the learning needs identified in assessments is essential to good outcomes.

Further quantitative and qualitative research on classroom assessment practices and impact is needed. At the same time, it is also important to remember that it may not be possible to generalise research results. Classroom practices ultimately need to be based on general principles and adapted to teacher and learner preferences and needs.

3.3 DEVELOP A LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO INTEGRATE NEW APPROACHES ACROSS SYSTEMS

Key messages for policy makers:

- **Ensure that long-term change strategies follow the overall vision for education (key message 1) and establish a clear plan for implementation and evaluation of change processes and impact.** Change strategies need to build on the existing national, regional, school education contexts and cultures.
- **Take a strategic approach to introducing changes over time and piloting and refining new assessment approaches in selected schools and school networks prior to introducing system-wide change.** Changes may also be introduced with a primary school cohort and developed in later grades as they progress through school.

²⁵ Kingston, N. M. and Nash, B. (2011). Op cit.

- **Support school leaders (school, department heads and other leaders) to lead whole school change involving all school staff, learners, parents, and other stakeholders to integrate new approaches to assessment of learner competences.** Leadership of collaborative school evaluation (internal and external) and school development plans is essential to effective change processes.
- **Ensure teacher autonomy to integrate new approaches to assessment and provide access to relevant professional learning opportunities as well as guidelines, tools and good practice exemplars – including practical approaches to integrating classroom assessment.** Teacher engagement in change processes and confidence in their ability to integrate new methods are essential to long-term change.
- **Ensure that teacher certification examinations, professional standards, teacher appraisal and school evaluations all require that teachers demonstrate competences related to classroom-based summative and formative assessment of learner competences.** Consistent emphasis on the need for teachers to develop their capacity to assess learner competences will also provide incentives for teacher educators (initial and continuing) to include assessment as a significant area for study and as part of their own teaching and learning approaches.

Long-term strategies to introduce new approaches to assessment of learner competences need to build on existing systems, and to take account of why and how different approaches have been developed, and the barriers and enablers to change.

Working Group members highlighted the importance of strategies to influence mindsets over time. Leadership is essential to changing ideas about the role of assessment of and for learning. At school level, a whole school approach can be more effective to supporting change within individual classrooms. Teachers may collaborate as they introduce new approaches. Learners may also have opportunities to voice their views in classrooms and at school level. School level peers may influence mindsets among teachers, learners, and parents.

The Working Group members also highlighted various elements to be considered in developing an effective strategy, including: coherence with curricular aims; coherence with collaborative school evaluation and school-based development; attention to school learning environments; providing guidelines and frameworks to support consistency across schools; outreach to and engagement teachers, parents and learners on proposed changes to classroom assessment and to develop a common understanding and ownership of changes; investment in teacher initial and continuing education and professional learning communities in schools and across networks; sharing of good practice exemplars; sharing of evidence on impact of different assessment methods; and, engaging parents in formative assessment by sharing feedback in online platforms.

Working Group members also discussed the importance of **supporting teachers to acquire the skills, attitudes, and confidence they need** to navigate different assessment methods. Indeed, good

assessment practices require good teacher training, so that teachers are able to effectively integrate assessment in teaching and learning (e.g., dialogue-based approaches, inquiry-based learning, support for learner self-assessment, and so on). Well-trained teachers can maximise the benefits of different assessment approaches.

Throughout Working Group meetings, members underlined that formative assessment needs to be tied to theories of learning, integrated into the planning and design of lessons and in the classroom culture. The relationship between teachers and students, and the use of digital tools to support assessment also needs to be considered.

Working Group members shared various steps they have taken to support long-term change.

Portugal. In 2018 schools were allowed greater autonomy and flexibility in the design of their curricula, one of the aims was to question and revise the goals, methods and tools for assessment. After some years, arise the perception that upper secondary schools were more focused on summative assessment, offering some resistance to the use of formative assessment, which they saw as taking away time from preparation for final exams. To address this, in external assessment, hybrid formats were introduced (some subjects interdependent, and some real hybrid items), with formative assessment.

Formative assessment is still not seen as having the same value as summative assessment in Portugal, and there are signs that more work is needed to support inclusion. To address these challenges, the MAIA Project (Projeto MAIA - National Project in Training, Supervision and Research in Classroom Assessment) was introduced by the Directorate-General for Education in 2019 to help teachers improve their assessment, practices through continuous training. The project is a capacity-building programme at national level in collaboration with teachers' training centres, school leaders and teachers to create conditions for pedagogical evaluation integrated in the curriculum development processes, providing, among several aspects, the updating and clarification of concepts, as well as reflection and change and exchange of practices.

In the **Czech Republic**, some schools, mainly at the primary level, have implemented alternative forms of assessment and gained very good results. To support greater take-up, an ambitious policy framework for the years 2020-2030 has been introduced. The draft "Long-Term Plan for years 2023–2027"²⁶ will be submitted to the Government for approval in September 2023. It proposes:

- Changes in the assessment of pupils in the school report in the 1st to 3rd years of primary school (i.e., cancellation of traditional grades and replacement by verbal or criterion-referenced assessment). These changes are proposed to be implemented in the period 2024-2025, through an amendment of the Education Act and the provision of methodological support for teachers. The concrete forms of support have not been established yet. However, such support, as included in the draft Long-Term Plan, may include methodological guidelines, training as part of the CPD for teachers, webinars, etc.

²⁶ Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System of the Czech Republic 2023–2027 will define key measures for the second phase of implementation of the Strategy of Education Policy of the Czech Republic 2030+.

A proposal for changes in assessments in subsequent years of primary and lower secondary education is also expected to be implemented over 2024-2025.

- Support to formative feedback. This support is proposed to be implemented in the period 2024-2027, through a formative assessment methodology, and an educational offer about formative assessment. As highlighted above, the concrete forms of support have not been established yet but as stipulated in the draft Long-Term Plan, these are likely to include methodological guidelines. The overall aim is to ensure that at least 25% of teachers at the 1st and 2nd years of elementary education effectively use formative assessment as a constructive feedback tool (at least 50% by 2030).

In **Hungary**, recent policy developments include the new National Core Curriculum introduced in 2020 which calls for new ways in assessing students in some subjects. The rules for assessment and evaluation system for primary and secondary schools are provided in Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education and also in Government Decree No. 20/2012 (VIII. 31.) EMMI on the operation of educational institutions and on the use of names of public educational institutions. Some of the provisions include:

- schools need to include in their local curriculum the ways of monitoring and evaluating the student's written, oral and practical work, diagnostic, summative and developmental forms (formative) of assessment, and the principles of assessment of behaviour and performance.
- The student's marks are determined on the basis of his/her mid-year performance and merit marks or his/her performance in the assessment examination. The parent shall be kept informed of the marks obtained by the student.
- students are given grades from 1 (insufficient) to 5 (excellent).
- for first graders at the end of the semester and at the end of the year, and for second graders at the end of the semester, a written grade/qualitative assessment (i.e., no numerical grade given at this time) must be given to indicate whether the student has achieved excellent, good or adequate results or needs to catch up.

Therefore, in the first grade and in the second-grade formative feedback is given about the students, about their skills and competencies they acquired so far.

The most important recent policy developments in relation to assessment in **Ireland** have been the launch of the Junior Cycle Framework in lower secondary schools in 2015. This provides schools with a flexible framework to enable them to design programmes of learning that are suited to the needs of their junior cycle students and to the particular context of the school. The framework outlines the curriculum and assessment opportunities that achieve a balance between learning subject knowledge and developing a wide range of skills and thinking abilities. The dual approach reduces the focus on one externally assessed examination and increases the prominence of classroom-based assessment and formative assessment.

Nevertheless, there is still a strong emphasis on summative assessment in the State Examination at Senior Cycle (Upper Secondary). Longer-term strategies will need to actively promote and support formative assessment at classroom level and inform parents on the value of formative assessment – including its potential to lead to better outcomes on summative examinations.

4. COUNTRY REPORTS

Portugal (host country)

Overview of assessment approaches and recent policy developments

Portuguese educational policies promote equal access to school, equal opportunities, and educational success. Therefore, appropriate assessment of learning is essential. In this context, Decree-Law number 55/ 2018,²⁷ on autonomy and curricular flexibility, recognizes formative assessment as "the main evaluation modality [that] allows to obtain privileged and systematic information in the various curricular domains (...)". As a result, formative assessment, in addition to summative assessment, is part of the process of learning in classrooms.

In terms of recent policy developments, the Directorate-General for Education in Portugal has been developing since 2019 the Maia Project (Projeto MAIA) (National Project in Training, Supervision and Research in Classroom Assessment). The project creates conditions for evaluation of pedagogies and how they support curricular aims. It helps teachers improve their assessment, teaching and learning practices through continuous training. The project works with teachers' training centres, school leaders and teachers to create conditions for pedagogical evaluation to be integrated in the curriculum development processes. It provides among several aspects, the updating and clarification of concepts, as well as reflection and exchange of practices.

Moreover, a reform of the school curriculum began in 2018. The curriculum has been redefined to a competence-based curriculum including critical thinking, problem solving, personal development and autonomy, awareness of global problems. The curriculum of each subject has been revised, and the freedom and liberty of schools to innovate in the curriculum was introduced.

Key conditions to enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

To attract people to the teaching profession, the Portuguese Directorate-General for Education and Directorate-General for School Administration have created a number of initiatives in Portugal. These initiatives also support the implementation of effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences in the classroom. Such initiatives include:

- The legislative framework on inclusive education and formative summative assessment (i.e., Decree Law no.55/2018 Schools' Autonomy and Curriculum Flexibility and Decree Law no. 54/2018 Inclusive education). These two pieces of legislation are creating conditions for schools as a place of inclusion and recognise the diversity of children in schools.
- Supporting multilingual classrooms programmes from the European Centre of Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (ECML)
- Effective teacher training including:
 - CPD is mandatory in Portugal.
 - School training centres (CFAEs) have schools associated to them which provide a training plan for teachers of the schools associated to them.

²⁷ Decree-Law number 55/2018 of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. (2018). Articles 22 and 24. Diário da República: I Série, number 129/2018. <https://files.dre.pt/1s/2018/07/12900/0292802943.pdf>

- Teacher Profession Guide (digital form)
- Happy School Training programme
- Training programmes in relation to inclusive education and assessment (MAIA project)

Challenges in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

The biggest challenges encountered in Portugal in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences, include the following:

- Teacher shortage- lack most teachers in the main subject areas particularly mathematics, Portuguese, geography, English, physics/chemistry and ICT.
- Teacher ageing- data from the school year 2019/2020 illustrates for instance out of 8567 kindergarten teachers only eight were under 30 years old, and 6831 were at least 50 years old.
- Shortage of pupils
- Multilingualism (e.g., 1 school cluster in Alentejo with a pre-school class where just one child was Portuguese).

Conclusions from the PLA and ways forward

Portugal has taken significant strides towards ensuring that equal, inclusive, and formative modes of assessment are implemented in schools. Portuguese educational policies and legislation recognise formative assessment as the main assessment method, as a way to support more learners to succeed, and promote greater equity. Nevertheless, some key challenges remain including teacher and pupil shortages, and some resistance from teachers to formative assessment practices.

Going forward, PLA participants recommended that Portugal should strive to: 1) ensure that capacity building programmes' (e.g., the MAIA project) impact guarantees the sustainability of assessment practices in classrooms; 2) ensure that the teaching-learning process for all learners is underpinned by formative assessment; 3) support principals and middle leaders to assure that formative assessment practices reach the classroom with a strategic and intentional approach linked to the context and the pedagogical practices; 4) continue to support schools so that every teachers' pedagogical practices are embedded in formative assessment; and 5) reform their ITE programme which sees the student teacher in practical classroom training and work on connecting the initial and continuous training of teachers.

Austria:

Overview of assessment practices and recent policy developments

While summative assessment practices are implemented throughout all school grades, Austria also has the legislation and curricula to promote formative assessment. A wide range of assessment practices are in place in Austria focusing on both summative and formative assessment including:

- Compulsory alternative assessment in addition to numerical grades in primary schools
- Pupil - legal guardian - teacher - talks in primary and compulsory secondary schools

- Competence-based curricula in primary and lower secondary schools. As support, the Ministry provides rubrics for formative feedback
- National assessment in Mathematics, German in year 3, 4, 7 and 8, English in year 7 and 8 only
- Diagnosis of language skills through standardised tests.

Recent policy developments have focused on competence orientation, early diagnosis of competences, standardised tests, and the implementation of a range of tools to support assessment (e.g., rubrics). The most recent development is the implementation of the "Quality Management System for Schools", including the "Quality Framework for Schools".

Key conditions to enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

A number of key conditions within the education system enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences. These are:

- The Quality Management System for Schools which was implemented in Austria in order to monitor and ensure aim-based school development. The quality management system is based on the Quality Framework for Schools ([QMS – EN](#)) which describes the essential characteristics of school quality. "Assessing performance" is a part of the quality dimension "Learning and teaching".
- Centralised legal requirements;
 - New competence-based curricula for primary and lower secondary schools
 - Standardised tests;
 - A wide range of tools supporting assessment (e.g., school entry, language competences, rubrics)
- Initial teacher education and continuous professional development activities

Challenges in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

The biggest challenges encountered in Austria in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences, include the following:

- **Teachers:** teacher shortages; common practice and pressure to assess with numerical marks; challenge of implementing new policies e.g., new curricula; compulsory written/alternative assessment in addition to numerical marks in primary schools
- **Involvement of learners and parents:** less involvement as school level increases; language related issues; time requirement/lack of teacher resources
- **Assessment of social and emotional learning (SEL):** promoted in the social skills of the curriculum but not included in national assessment; voluntary national assessment is planned.
- **Using technology:** challenges in understanding what the future assessment criteria are when using new tools such as ChatGPT.

Conclusions from the PLA and ways forward

In Austria formative assessment is promoted through a variety of policies for example new competence-based curricula, rubrics and the quality framework for schools. There is a wide variety of assessment practices (formative, summative) in place. Yet the use of formative assessment declines with increasing school levels. The Austrian participants took a lot of inspiration and ideas with them from the PLA, including the specific areas that need to be tackled further in Austria to strengthen effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences.

The voices of students and stakeholders should be taken into account in the process of developing and implementing changes in assessment in Austria. Students' voice needs to be strengthened at all levels in Austria not only because of the positive impact, but also because it is their right to be involved. Furthermore, the important role of school leaders and peer-learning communities were highlighted in the PLA. The exchange of good practice needs to be supported in order to achieve a change of practice.

PLA participants recommended Austria to: 1) provide support material based on formative assessment in classrooms; 2) delay the separation of students according to assessment; 3) use teacher communities and share best practice; 4) encourage teacher collaboration around setting criteria for success and assessing in a different way; 5) integrating alternative methods and formative assessment into lower secondary schools; 6) promote specific continuous development on formative assessment; 7) introduce AI into CPD and training; and 8) investigate how to assess students with learning difficulties.

Belgium (French Community):

Overview of assessment practices and recent policy developments

The Belgian education system is built around freedom of education, where assessment is one of the key aspects for which educational freedom is guaranteed. As a result, both summative and formative assessment practices are extensively used in primary and secondary education in the French Community of Belgium. The French Community has a long tradition of formative assessment since it was implemented in 1997. Formative assessment is compulsory and is used both by schools and in non-certificate external evaluations.

A number of recent policy developments have been implemented in compulsory education:

- Reform of the Pact for Excellence in Teaching including:
 - A new curriculum for common core subjects, that is implemented progressively (as from September 2023: until 4th grade)
 - VET >> New PEQ (Parcours d'enseignement Qualifiant)
 - New curricula already in the 3rd year of Pre-Primary education (which is compulsory)
 - Progressive approach to learning difficulties: From 1st September 2023 in 1st to 4th grades in the French Community pupils will receive periods of reinforced supervision- known as "AP period"²⁸;

²⁸ Circulaire 8936 du 01/06/2023 : Informations relatives à la mise en œuvre du tronc commun durant l'année scolaire 2023-2024 : http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=26823&do_id=9191

- Reform of initial teacher education (extended to 4 years) in higher education as a consequence of the reform of the Pact for Excellence in Teaching.

Key conditions to enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

The Pact for Excellence in education is a key enabler to ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences in the French Community. It provides Guidance Standards on Conformity including indicators, general objectives, reference guidelines for pre-primary, primary and secondary education, new curricula for common core subjects that is implemented progressively, and pedagogical models. The Pact also stimulates innovation (e.g., through e-classe.be.)

Challenges in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

The biggest challenges encountered in the French Community in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences, include the following:

- High rate of grade retention which implies that the implementation of formative assessment is not sufficient;
- The relegation to VET even if there is a common Certificate of Upper Secondary Education; and
- The large disparity in the results between pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Conclusions from the PLA and ways forward

A well-developed formative assessment system is in place in the French Community. A good VET system is also in place, which could inspire general education (for example concerning its modular approach, with clearly established learning goals and a system of Certification by Learning Unit; but also more time and support that is provided to students experiencing difficulties). Nevertheless, there is a need for more support to reduce grade retention in the French Community. In order to try to combat this issue, PLA participants recommended that support should be provided for individualised interventions/differentiation and tutoring. In addition, it was highlighted that the focus should be placed on students' needs and interests rather than on difficulties and failures.

Croatia:

Overview of assessment practices and recent policy developments

Regulation regarding assessment is applicable in both primary (grades I-VIII) and secondary education (I-IV) in Croatia. The success of students is monitored and evaluated during classes, and students are evaluated in each subject through the school year and at the end of the school year with the final grade.

A number of recent policy developments have been implemented in compulsory education in Croatia in relation to assessment including:

- **Comprehensive curricular reform "School for Life"**- a new curriculum for primary and secondary education was implemented in 2018/2019, which introduces new approaches to assessment including assessment for learning, assessment as learning and assessment of what has been learned.

- Introduction of national exams from elementary school (4th and 8th grade) to high school system (**new state matura**) in 2022/2023

Key conditions to enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

A number of key conditions within the education system enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences in Croatia. These are:

- new curricula for every subject in primary and secondary education which has led to new and improved textbooks and a new law enabling the transition towards digital resources
- an improvement in the teachers' profile through changes in the regulatory framework enabling improvement in their expertise, as well as their pay
- increased standard of teaching material and equipment
- creation of a positive and supportive environment for all within the school community
- Support from parents

Challenges in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

The biggest challenges encountered in Croatia in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences, include the following:

- ensuring consistency across schools
- the non-adherence to the criterion approach to assessment
- focus still being placed by teachers on the content, rather than the learning outcomes
- the meaningful use of technology
- the evaluation of students with special needs

Conclusions from the PLA and ways forward

While Croatia has a well-established formative assessment system in place, further actions can be taken to address some of the key challenges to ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences. The PLA has encouraged the Croatian participants to work further with the teacher training agency on guidelines for formative assessment, think further on what can be done to minimise the high-stake grades in Croatia, and use the national exams to promote formative assessment at different levels through a whole school approach.

Czech Republic:

Overview of assessment practices and recent policy developments

Most schools in the Czech Republic assess their pupils using a 5-grades system (1-excellent, 5-insufficient). The possibility of alternative forms of assessment was introduced in the Czech Republic in 2005. Some schools have implemented alternative forms of assessment, mainly at the primary level, and gained very good results.

An ambitious policy framework for the years 2020-2030 has been introduced in the Czech Republic. The draft “Long-Term Plan for years 2023–2027”²⁹ will be submitted to the Government for approval in September 2023. It includes the following proposed reforms:

- Changes in the assessment of pupils in the school report in the 1st to 3rd years of primary school (i.e., cancellation of traditional grades and replacement by verbal or criterion-referenced assessment). These changes are proposed to be implemented in the period 2024-2025, through an amendment of the Education Act and the provision of methodological support for teachers. The concrete forms of support have not been established yet. However, such support, as included in the draft Long-Term Plan, may include methodological guidelines, training as part of the CPD for teachers, webinars, etc. A proposal for changes in assessments in subsequent years of primary and lower secondary education is also expected to be implemented over 2024-2025.
- Support to formative feedback. This support is proposed to be implemented in the period 2024-2027, through a formative assessment methodology, and an educational offer about formative assessment. As highlighted above, the concrete forms of support have not been established yet but as stipulated in the draft Long-Term Plan, these are likely to include methodological guidelines. The overall aim is to ensure that at least 25% of teachers at the 1st and 2nd years of elementary education effectively use formative assessment as a constructive feedback tool (at least 50% by 2030).

Key conditions to enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners’ key competences

A number of key conditions within the education system enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners’ key competences. These are:

- School autonomy and their high level of ownership to decide on their assessment approaches and practices.
- The role of National Pedagogical Institute and other accredited organisations regarding the methodological support provided to schools. The National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic is run directly by the ministry. It ensures the transfer of educational innovations from the central strategic level to school practice in the regions. It creates framework educational programs for pre-school, primary and secondary education. It provides methodological support for schools and teachers and targeted training of teachers (in a wide range of areas, including assessment). The regional offices of the National Pedagogical Institute have an important role in supporting schools in the regions.

Challenges in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners’ key competences

- Resistance to change by schools, parents and wider professional public
- Lack of consistency and transparency of assessment practices
- Lack of involvement of students in assessment
- Competitive approach versus creation of a supportive environment in schools (e.g., working creatively with errors)

²⁹ Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System of the Czech Republic 2023–2027 will define key measures for the second phase of implementation of the Strategy of Education Policy of the Czech Republic 2030+.

Conclusions from the PLA and ways forward

There are schools in the Czech Republic that have implemented alternative forms of assessment and achieved very good results. The PLA provided the Czech participant with a number of key points of action that could be taken forward in the Czech Republic to ensure further uptake and implementation of formative assessment practices in schools. These include the following:

- Involve stakeholders, municipalities and academic/scientific community in planning and implementation of the proposed reforms.
- Consistently incorporate the topic of alternative assessment into strategic and implementation materials.
- Support school-leaders in implementing the whole-school approach towards new forms of assessment.
- Identify the enablers/barriers the schools have experienced while introducing formative assessment in the past and define the benefits.
- Support teachers' collaboration and exchange of good practices in this area.
- Try to understand the reasons why teachers and school-leaders do not agree with the proposed reforms, and what systemic changes are needed to address their concerns
- Use the schools that have been successful in implementing alternative forms of assessment as ambassadors.
- Cooperate with municipalities on dissemination of good practices.
- Encourage participation in Erasmus+ KA2 (projects focusing on assessment).

France:

Overview of assessment practices and recent policy developments

In France, teachers are relatively free in the way they conduct assessment in their classrooms. While this has led to positive developments in classrooms, especially in kindergarten and primary education, assessment in the classroom could be better coordinated within schools and more coherent in terms of aims, types, methods and frequency. Moreover, formative assessment remains underdeveloped in secondary schools, with assessment of learning taking precedence over assessment for learning. Formative and summative assessments are frequently confused within a single mark in France.

Various recent policy developments have been taken in France in relation to assessment practices in primary and secondary education. A number of framework laws were introduced in 2005³⁰, 2013³¹ and 2019³² which have impacted assessment practices in the classroom. Assessment is included in the ministerial 2022-2025 masterplan for teachers and staff's continuous training³³. The subject is also addressed by numerous guidelines published on the [Eduscol website](#) (national online platform for accompanying teachers). It is referred to in circulars, in the curricula (to varying degrees depending on

³⁰ Law no. 2005-380 of 23 April 2005 on the orientation and programming for the future of school

³¹ Law no. 2013-595 of 8 July 2013 on the orientation and programming of the French Republic's schools.

³² Law no. 2019-791 of 26 July 2019 for a school of confidence

³³ Schéma directeur de la formation continue des personnels du ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de la Jeunesse et des Sports - 2022-2025

the subject) and in the 2013 reference framework of professional competences for teaching and education professions³⁴. Since 2021, the schools' assessment policy must be formalised and explained in a document called the assessment project in higher secondary schools. Also, assessment in the classroom must take into account the larger French assessment ecosystem made of national evaluations, exams, the single school booklet, etc.

Key conditions to enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

A number of key conditions within the education system enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences in France. These are:

- Toolkits such as the “common set of competences”, booklets, programmes, exams, and the contents of the standardised evaluations that set the direction of the evaluation. The single school booklet encourages competence-based and formative assessment- it follows pupils from the age of 6 to the age of 16 allowing them and their families to notice progress. It also helps teachers to observe gaps and shortcomings in the previous years and to adapt their teaching to allow pupils to catch-up.
- Circulars and accompanying documents which help teachers to understand the different possibilities and to implement them.
- The importance placed on the fact that evaluation should not be isolated from other issues related to student orientation, certification, the role of diplomas, pedagogy, the implementation of support systems, personalisation and training.
- The Ministry of National Education providing impetus and support, through the publication and updating of the various abovementioned documents and by encouraging delivery of pilot projects in the academies.

Challenges in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

The biggest challenges encountered in France in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences include the following:

- Changing the mindset of teachers, most notably in secondary education
- Assessment sometimes being a source of tension within the educational team, particularly in secondary schools, because of the different understanding of the “common set of competencies”. Assessment is therefore often considered to be the exclusive responsibility of each teacher.
- Contradictory injunctions: assessment may be considered to be the exclusive responsibility of teachers, but in the meantime, they are asked to produce a common assessment project at school level.
- The new baccalauréat which has increased the importance of marks during the last two years of high school. Such importance placed on marks does not favour constructive and formative assessment.

³⁴ Référentiel des compétences professionnelles des métiers du professorat et de l'éducation

- The conflict between institutional level impetus and pedagogical freedom

Conclusions from the PLA and ways forward

While the autonomy given to French teachers provides room for innovation, this can be an obstacle to consistency and homogeneity of assessment at national level. To tackle the issue, PLA participants provided the French representative with a number of recommendations regarding training. A certain amount of hours should be officially dedicated to assessment in pre-service training; and in terms of continuous training, local communities of practice should be encouraged to allow for continuous discussions and improvement between peers. Moreover, at higher secondary level, curricula in France, without being too rigid, could be more specific about assessment.

Hungary:

Overview of assessment practices and recent policy developments

Recent policy developments include the new National Core Curriculum introduced in 2020. In some cases it calls for new ways in assessing students in some subjects. The rules for assessment and evaluation system for primary and secondary schools are provided in Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education and also in Government Decree No. 20/2012 (VIII. 31.) EMMI on the operation of educational institutions and on the use of names of public educational institutions. Some of the provisions include:

- schools need to include in their local curriculum the ways of monitoring and evaluating the student's written, oral and practical work, diagnostic, summative and developmental forms (formative) of assessment, and the principles of assessment of behaviour and performance.
- The student's marks are determined on the basis of his/her mid-year performance and merit marks or his/her performance in the assessment examination. The parent shall be kept informed of the marks obtained by the student.
- students are given grades from 1 (insufficient) to 5 (excellent).
- for first graders at the end of the semester and at the end of the year, and for second graders at the end of the semester, a written grade/qualitative assessment (i.e., no numerical grade given at this time) must be given to indicate whether the student has achieved excellent, good or adequate results or needs to catch up.

Therefore, in the first grade and in the second-grade formative feedback is given about the students, about their skills and competencies they acquired so far.

Key conditions to enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

A number of **key conditions** within the education system enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences in Hungary. These are:

- Formative assessment and feedback in first grade in all subjects,
- Teachers' autonomy on how to assess pupils in upper grades,

- The requirement for schools to clearly define the form of assessment in their pedagogical programme including:
 - The grading system; and
 - Rules of notification for pupils and parents
- Several compulsory in-service training sessions for teachers in developing their competences in the different assessment methods, many of which are on formative assessment.
- Post-graduate training for teachers in measurement-evaluation

Challenges in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

The biggest challenges encountered in Hungary in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences, include the following:

- Large classroom sizes
- On a policy level, in the NCC there are suggested new assessment methods, but teachers are free to choose their methods for classroom assessment, and hence may not apply the new assessment methods in practice
- Parents' demand for grades
- Teachers: including the ageing of teachers, lack of young teachers, and resistance to apply new teaching methods

Conclusions from the PLA and ways forward

In Hungary there are many in-service teacher training programmes available for teachers, some of them deal with measurement and assessments. Pedagogical Centres for teachers also offer and organise activities and peer learning activities for schools, but further efforts may be needed to promote formative assessment. Teachers should be encouraged to collaborate, through sharing practices, working on projects together, using online teacher communities, etc. The PLA provided the Hungarian participant with a number of recommended actions to take forward to combat the challenges faced in implementing formative assessment practices and ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences in Hungary. It was also recommended that efforts should be continued to be made to reduce classroom sizes by attracting more teachers to the profession. Promoting a whole-school approach in relation to assessment is also important in addition to taking action to educate and inform parents of the value of formative assessment.

Ireland:

Overview of assessment practices and recent policy developments

In Ireland there is a centralised system of education- the Ministry of Education provides the circulars and policies which govern the operation of schools. There is a focus on a broad range of assessment, including both summative and formative assessment. A wide range of formative assessment practices are included within the Irish school system including:

- Junior Cycle for learners aged 12/13 to 15/16 (Lower Secondary) leading to first State Examination: Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. There is a focus on a broad range of assessment and an emphasis on formative assessment.
- Transition Year (optional Curricular Programme for 15/16-year-old): a broad range of assessment is used involving learning logs, portfolios of work, certification for completion of short courses.
- The Leaving Cert Applied examination includes a broad range of assessment, portfolio and continuous assessment.

The most important recent policy developments in relation to assessment in Ireland have been the launch of the Junior Cycle Framework in lower secondary schools in 2015. This provides schools with a flexible framework to enable them to design programmes of learning that are suited to the needs of their junior cycle students and to the particular context of the school. The framework outlines the curriculum and assessment opportunities that achieve a balance between learning subject knowledge and developing a wide range of skills and thinking abilities. The dual approach reduces the focus on one externally assessed examination and increases the prominence of classroom-based assessment and formative assessment.

Key conditions to enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

A number of key conditions within the Irish education system enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences. These are:

- The ongoing commitment at government level to support inclusion
- 20% of education budget assigned to support learners with special education needs
- Education policies which reflect inclusion
- Curriculum and assessment reform has a focus on inclusion
- Broadening of assessment to include portfolio, continuous assessment, project work and classroom based assessment
- Commitment to inclusive schools and mixed-ability classrooms with increasing emphasis on co-teaching and extra supports within the mainstream classroom to provide formative assessment "in the moment"
- Strong focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Refugee and migrant learners: supports for teaching resources and professional development for teachers
- Assessment of language of schooling aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
- Language support aligned to the curriculum
- Asset based approach
- Support for home languages as an inclusive approach – also when doing assessments

Challenges in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

The biggest challenges encountered in Ireland in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences, include the following:

- Insufficient teacher professional development
- Teacher collaboration and peer learning

- Lack of time
- Student voice – the need for a greater emphasis on student centred approaches to assessment
- Offering choices to students on how to demonstrate their learning
- Parental voice – persuading parents of the value of a broad range of assessment

Conclusions from the PLA and ways forward

Ireland has made very good progress in formative assessment practices in Lower Secondary, has very good and inclusive curricular programmes and tools for school self-evaluation, and communication and engagement with stakeholders is very strong. Nevertheless, there is still a strong emphasis on summative assessment in the State Examination at Senior Cycle (Upper Secondary). The PLA provided the Irish participant with key considerations of what action can still be taken to ensure the implementation of inclusive formative assessment practices in the classroom. These include promoting and supporting formative assessment at classroom level and informing parents on the value of formative assessment.

Malta:

Overview of assessment practices and recent policy developments

Formative assessment practices are used in schools in Malta. Formative assessment methods include homework, classroom observations, questioning techniques (e.g., open-ended questions or quizzes) and informal assessments (e.g., class discussions, group activities, exit tickets, quick quizzes, which provide immediate feedback to both teachers and students). In Malta, summative assessments are standardized and play a role in determining students' final grades. A common practice for summative assessments is conducting end-of-unit or end-of-year exams that evaluate students' understanding and proficiency in specific subjects. From Year 4 to Year 6, annual exams are administered for English, Maths, Maltese, and Science. Similarly, for Year 7 to Year 11, annual exams cover all subjects except PSCD (Personal, Social, and Career Development).

Recent policies have been implemented in Malta to ensure the use of formative assessment practices in schools. These include:

Learning Outcomes Framework including:

- Ticking (i.e., online reporting for each Specific Learning Outcome by ticking the relevant level achieved on a Likert Scale- started to be achieved, partially achieved, satisfactorily achieved, fully achieved). Learning Outcomes and encouraging teachers to use a range of assessment procedures when assessing students.
- Weighting being given to a continuous mark, which comprises a percentage for competence-based assessment and a percentage for summative assessment.
- The Assessment for Learning Methodology: educational officers teach approaches to teachers and students on how to become reflective practitioners and learners and encourage the use of formative assessment.

Annual Examinations including:

- Dyslexia-friendly fonts and papers

- Adaptations for visually impaired students

Key conditions to enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

Key conditions within the education system which enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences in Malta include:

- Different teaching programmes and assessments (including annual examination papers) offered to middle and secondary school students in core subjects (Maltese, English and Mathematics).
- Access Arrangement provisions recommended by specialists are provided throughout the learning experience of students as well as in assessments such as readers, scribe, and extra time.

Challenges in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

The biggest challenges encountered in Malta in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences, include the following:

Building teachers' competencies and teachers' autonomy and control of the assessment practices including:

- lack of importance given to this issue in tertiary level/ initial teacher education programmes.
- lack of time slots to train teachers once in the profession
- union disputes that hinder teacher training and the implementation of effective and inclusive assessment of learner's key competences.
- If high-stake examinations do not allow inclusive methods of assessments where students can customise or choose their preferred mode of assessment, then teachers will consider it a waste of time to include this approach in their everyday teaching and assessment practices (the washback effect).

Involvement of learners and parents including:

- Lack of knowledge on how this can be attained
- Time constraints
- Parents not interested/not knowledgeable/not motivates

Assessment of SEL being conducted by educational psychologists and not teachers in Malta

Conclusions from the PLA and ways forward

While strong efforts and ambitious policies have been taken in Malta to implement formative assessment practices in schools, barriers and resistance remains from teachers, learners and parents alike. The Maltese participant took a number of key actions away from the PLA which could enhance formative assessment in schools in Malta while also emphasizing the significance of summative assessment. These include legislative support; rubrics for competence-based teaching, committees and exchange of good practice; defining effective teaching; exploring and implementing softer methods of moderation in VET involving teachers discussing and aligning task criteria and success criteria, promoting consistency and fairness in assessment practices; establishing assessment criteria; developing a language of assessment; and implementing a system of continuous assessment.

Slovenia:

Overview of assessment practices and recent policy developments

In Slovenia, assessment and evaluation of knowledge is defined by the Rules on knowledge assessment and grading and students' progress to a higher class standing in elementary schools 2013. The rules specify that the goal of evaluation activities is not assessment, but rather obtaining information on how individual students meet the aims and standards set by curricula. Assessment, on the other hand, comprises both establishment and appraisal of how successfully a child has met the prescribed aims and standards. Both summative and formative assessment practices are implemented in primary and secondary education.

For more than a decade, the [Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo](#) (National Educational Institute) has been implementing various application projects concerning the development and introduction of specific elements of formative assessment to enhance summative assessment within mandatory curricula. Despite such support of formative assessment through project implementation, no improvements have been made on the legislative level.

Slovenia is currently in the process of preparing the National Programme of Education by 2033, which is being carried out by a working group. The working group plans to form guidelines and strategic goals for educational policies, focusing also on learning, teaching, knowledge assessment and grading.

Key conditions to enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

In terms of key conditions which enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences in Slovenia, the findings of the research project *Supportive Learning Environment for Motivated Learning and Quality Knowledge* (Educational Research Institute, 20218-2020) have illustrated the importance of the teaching process to learning motivation and supporting successful and inclusive learning for all students. The goal of the project was to examine - in the learning context (social, school, interpersonal, personal) the role of the factors affecting learning motivation and knowledge acquisition in primary and secondary schools. An additional aim was to prepare a list of educational process quality indicators to enable monitoring and evaluation in various environments, in individual schools, at different levels of education and in the entire public education system of Slovenia. The research therefore draws attention to the indicator defining appropriateness of teachers' qualification (basic formal education and permanent professional training), since the results have shown its relevance for quality pedagogical process management.

Challenges in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences

A number of challenges have been encountered in Slovenia in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners' key competences. _There is a lack of knowledge among teachers of the importance of teacher practices, particularly formative assessment practices, to increasing pupils' learning motivation. This is mainly due to the fact that such practices are not taught in IET and CPD courses for teachers. .Moreover, schools highlight that the current regulation and policy:

- do not provide enough support for assessment of student's progress and evaluation. It is the most serious obstacle to introduction of new teaching and learning approaches;

- knowledge assessment is not adequately incorporated in the learning process. This prevents full integration of formative assessment in the teaching process (although this approach has been promoted and is being practiced for more than a decade); and
- International research indicators (PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS) show a low level of motivation and commitment in Slovene students, in spite of their relatively high achievements.

Conclusions from the PLA and ways forward

While Slovenia has a number of projects supporting formative assessment that have been carried out for more than a decade, challenges in implementing formative assessment practices in schools still remain. The improvement of didactic approaches is needed to support successful and inclusive education, by taking into account students' differences, specific needs, competences, the extent of prior knowledge and individual learning styles. The PLA provided useful recommendations on actions that can be taken in Slovenia. These include enabling less bureaucratic evaluations, reducing the number of grades, providing teachers with more autonomy, and enabling them to monitor students' progress. The creation of a legal basis to support assessment of students' progress, providing guidelines for formative assessments which do not tell the teacher what to do, and establishing an effective teacher education and training system will be key to ensuring such progress.

Sweden:

Overview of assessment practices and recent policy developments

The Swedish school system, which is highly decentralised, places huge importance on grades- a ground for eligibility and selection to upper secondary school and higher education. While the curriculum stipulates that teachers should monitor pupils' progress through continuous assessment, such practices, including formative assessment, are not always sufficiently implemented in practice.

A number of recent policies have been implemented regarding summative and formative assessment practices in schools in Sweden. These include:

- National tests and assessment support being digitalised, some of this assessment support has a more formative focus;
- "Knowledge requirements" being changed to "grading criteria" that are less detailed and more open to varied assessment situations, and a principle for more flexible assessment for the grades D-A was introduced;
- The reading-writing-mathematics guarantee (see below for further information)
- Subject grades will replace course grades in upper secondary education from 1 July 2025, which provides more time for teachers and students before the final grades are set.

Some of these policies can have a positive impact on formative assessment. For example, the reading-writing-mathematics guarantee provides for the pupil's knowledge in Swedish and mathematics to be assessed in preschool class and year 1 by using national assessment materials. If the teacher sees that a pupil shows an indication of not achieving the requirements, a special assessment must be carried out and extra support put in place if necessary. The extra support should also be followed up.

The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) is currently working on developing guidelines for the creation of materials that inspire teachers to develop their assessment competences. Key components are to identify the source(s) of learner misconceptions, and to scaffold the next steps by adjusting their teaching to better meet a broad range of student needs. Building a “feedback culture” within classrooms and supporting learners’ active engagement in learning and assessment processes are very important.

Key conditions to enable the effective and inclusive assessment of learners’ key competences

One key strength of the Swedish education system which is pivotal to enabling effective and inclusive assessment of learners’ key competences and the basis of the Swedish assessment system is the high trust society places on teachers. While this is mainly due to the importance placed on grades, it is also a key enabler to ensure effective competence-based assessment.

To achieve consensus on assessment and how teaching can be developed, the support material for formative assessment, see above, will be developed in a way that can be used for collaborative learning, which has proven to be a successful approach for developing competences.

Challenges in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners’ key competences

A number of **challenges** have been encountered in Sweden in ensuring effective and inclusive assessment of learners’ key competences and implementing formative assessment. These include:

- A decentralised and privatised education system
- Competing schools
- Large focus on assessment and documentation
- Importance placed on grades and summative assessment, resulting in grading stress for both teachers and students, but also the room for formative assessment in the classroom being reduced
- Grades risk being more important than learning

Conclusions from the PLA and ways forward

The PLA provided the Swedish participants with recommended actions that could be taken to create more space for formative assessment in the classroom. Firstly, the importance of the teacher-set grades should be reduced, or balanced, by e.g., externally graded exams that affect selection. Any action taken to reduce the focus on grades, should be analysed against the consequences (i.e., teachers’ status being affected). Teachers should be offered concrete and subject-specific support for both formative and summative assessment. Including formative assessment in the professional program and the requirements that lead to qualifications for teachers would also strengthen the focus on formative assessment. Moreover, the State may support the development of networks for collegial learning between schools in formative assessment, and further influence principals to take advantage of the potential that exists with formative assessment, particularly how it is one of the most effective ways to improve results.

5. CONCLUSION

This report has brought together the results of the **Working Group Schools, Pathways to School Success** work on **how policy makers can support effective and inclusive whole-school approaches to integrating formative and summative assessment of learners' key competences in teaching and learning.**

The Group has highlighted the importance of coherent, system-wide approaches to learner assessment (external and internal assessments), teacher and school leader appraisal, school evaluation (external and internal), which are also coherent with the overall aims for education, including aims for equity and inclusion, and with standards and competence-based curricula.

The key messages developed by the Working Group have been set out as broad principles which may be adapted by diverse education systems as appropriate for their own contexts. Examples of national/regional policies introducing new approaches to classroom-based assessment of learner competences have been shared, along with school-level initiatives have been shared to illustrate the messages.

Challenges to changing classroom-based assessment have also been highlighted, including, for various reasons" resistance of parents and teachers to changes in assessment methods; in supporting system-wide change to teachers' assessment practices; in the lack of attention to assessment to support learners' personal development and well-being; and few opportunities for learners and other stakeholders to share their experiences and views on assessment policies and practices. Each of these challenges merits further attention.

While beyond the scope of this report, persistent tensions with external high-stakes assessments; the importance of deepening trust in teachers' professional judgement and of improving the reliability of alternative, teacher-scored assessments of learner competences; and implications of generative artificial intelligence for student assessment have also been raised as areas for further study.

These concerns all resonate with longer-term trends in learner assessment as highlighted by stakeholders across Europe, including: the ongoing shift towards competence-oriented education and assessment; changes in the labour market and the need for learners to develop new competences throughout their lives; digitalisation of education and technological innovations; growing socioeconomic inequalities in Europe and increasing diversity in schools and classrooms due to mobility and migration, and a need for more inclusive assessment practices; and, an ongoing focus on developing standards-based curriculum and strengthening evidence-based policymaking.³⁵

The Working Group's approach to peer learning across diverse countries and stakeholder groups creates opportunities to explore research evidence as well as to learn from others' experiences in promoting change across complex education systems related to these challenges and trends. Sharing of experiences and ideas may also inspire new and potentially innovative strategies in the different contexts.

³⁵ European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Prospective report on the future of assessment in primary and secondary education : executive summary*, Publications Office, 2020, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/527561>