



PRESS RELEASE

EMBRACE

FOSTERING INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC)

EMBRACE project is an Erasmus+ KA2 project, running between January 2022 and December 2023 with the objective to foster the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities and thus contribute to the enhancement of the quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC). The partner organisations are from Belgium (EASPD), Greece (KMOP and RDPSEA), Poland (Teatr Grodzki), Cyprus (Emphasys Centre) and North Macedonia (KMOP Skopje).

Description

On 1 December, back-to-back with the celebrations for the European Day of Persons with Disabilities 2023, the final conference of the EMBRACE project took place. EASPD hosted the hybrid event, also part of the [lifelong learning week 2023](#) programme. The project partners from Belgium, Greece, Poland, Cyprus and North Macedonia gathered in Brussels, at the European Economic and Social Committee and were joined by 234 participants following the event in person or online.

The main aim of the conference was to present the Embrace project and its project results, aimed at enhancing the quality of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), and discuss existing policies and challenges associated with achieving inclusive ECEC.

After a general presentation of the Embrace project, the first panel focused on policies for the inclusion of children with disability in ECEC. Géraldine Libreau, from the European Commission presented the EU framework for ECEC and the work done by the [Working Group](#) on ECEC. Then, Aleksandra Petkova, from KMOP Skopje, presented the main findings of the project [Transnational Report](#). The panel concluded with Hilde Schockaert, from the Ghent City Department of Education, Education and Youth, who described the Belgian ECEC system and the Flemish model of inclusion coaches. In the second panel, the project partners presented the other project results and their methodology, starting with Jolanta Kajmowicz-Sopicka, from Teatr Grodzki, who presented the "[Fostering a culture of inclusion handbook](#)" and its tools and practices for inclusion. Secondly, Epameinondas Koutavelis, from KMOP, introduced the [E-learning course](#) for ECEC staff. Finally, Chrystalla Thrasyvoulou, from Emphasys Centre presented the structure, materials and testing of the [Awareness-raising toolkit](#).

Lessons learned and next steps

Reflecting on the lessons learned during the implementation of the project and collaborative journey, there was agreement about the fact this project intercepted an existing need due to the lack of tools and resources for inclusion in pre-primary education. Professionals in this field are actively seeking comprehensive resources and support systems to accommodate diverse needs within their classes.

The event concluded with the commitment to sustain and expand the precious work of EMBRACE.

Follow us

You can find all project results and details for the events held on the [project website](http://www.embrace.project.eu).



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