

Migrant education opportunities in the Baltic States: strong dependence on the level of school preparedness

Eve Mägi, Hanna Siarova

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Introduction

The purpose of this policy paper is to explore the national policy measures related to pupils with a migrant background in the three Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The paper aims to identify similarities of policy responses to specific educational needs related to migrant background and point out the differences in approaches, bringing forward the examples of successful practice. The paper serves as an overview of the topic in the Baltic region, which aims to enable mutual learning and inspire the development of most effective strategies in order to shape education policies towards greater inclusiveness to respond to the diverse needs of the learners.

The human landscape in these countries requires a shift from the targeted focus on accommodating the needs of historical minority of Russian and Polish (in Lithuania) origin to comprehensive and inclusive education systems that are in line with the Europe 2020 and ET

2020 objectives¹ among others. Recent inflows of immigrants who do not speak the national language or Russian, as well as the growing tendency in returnee rates in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania pose new challenges for the national education systems. Many schools are not prepared to meet these diverse linguistic and cultural needs, in terms of both human and financial resources. Therefore, even though newly arrived immigrants and returnees form only a fractional share of the overall pupil body in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in the light of growing mobility and transnationalism², the Baltic education systems have to demonstrate ability to support all pupils with various needs, including those arising from linguistic and cultural differences.

Based on migration trends and diverse specific educational needs, the following definitions are used here to distinguish various pupils' groups in the Baltic States:

BOX 1: Historical minority pupils

Historical minority pupils refer to children of people who immigrated and settled in the Baltic States during the Soviet times (1940–1991). These groups have different legal status across Baltic States. In Latvia and Estonia (after regaining independence in 1991) the naturalisation process for Soviet era settlers (most often coming from Russia) has been politically challenging and currently a considerable amount of people in this group is defined as “persons with undefined citizenship” (in Estonia) or “a non-citizen of Latvia” (in Latvia). Recently, the Estonian government initiated several policy changes to limit increase of persons with undefined citizenship³. In Lithuania, however, almost all permanent residents received local citizenship in the course of a relatively easy administrative procedure (19).

In Lithuania, in addition to Soviet era settlers, there is a significant group of Polish historical minority, which tracks back to Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth times (1569–1795).

¹ Promoting equity, social cohesion and citizenship is one of the four strategic objectives of ET 2020. The description of this objective explicitly referred to the education of children with a migrant background: “Education and training systems should aim to ensure that all learners — including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with special needs and migrants — complete their education, including, where appropriate, through second-chance education and the provision of more personalised learning” (46).

² When people are living essentially in several countries at once (16).

³ This means that children born for parents with undefined citizenship would obtain Estonian citizenship without additional requirements.

BOX 2: Newly arrived immigrant pupils

Newly arrived immigrant pupils refer to children who have recently arrived to the Baltic States (after 1991) and whose mother tongue is other than the state language. This serves as a composite definition combining the different concepts used in the three Baltic States.

In the regulative documents, all three countries apply the general concept of 'alien' towards non-citizens. However, Estonia distinguishes newly arrived immigrants (1) as a separate category which is defined through the length of period of their stay, those who legally immigrated and have lived in Estonia less than five years⁴. The Ministry of Education and Research applies the three year limit in the context of educational support system for newly arrived immigrant pupils for financial reasons⁵ (9).

In Latvia, 'aliens' or 'immigrants' include non-citizens, asylum seekers and refugees; while Lithuanian law applies very general definition of an 'alien' as anyone who is not a national of Lithuania (40). Statistics Lithuania identifies an immigrant as a person who arrives in the country for a period not shorter than 12 months. Therefore, the Lithuanian and Latvian definition of immigrant pupil might include a broader group of children than the Estonian term. Nevertheless, overall education strategies in Estonia and Lithuania similarly identify a different mother tongue from Estonian or Lithuanian as an educational special need (3: §6; 7).

BOX 3: Returnee pupils

Returnee pupils are defined as children of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian nationals, who have earlier emigrated and later came back to their country of birth or the country they have historically ethnic ties. In most of the cases these groups of children are registered under the 'newly arrived immigrant' label (if they do not hold the citizenship of Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania) or are not tracked at all as is the case in Latvia and Lithuania (if they possess citizenship of Latvia or Lithuania). In the case of Estonia, the Estonian Education Information System enables differentiation by background characteristic: a pupil with a language of instruction being other than language spoken at home and as of 2013 returnee pupil; however, the latter group is not identified by the language spoken at home. In the Baltic countries, schools are not obliged to collect data on mobility profiles of their pupils, which makes it hard to distinguish the group of returnees. Currently, it is possible to track the number of returnee pupils in Lithuania according to the schools applications for additional funding to support the integration of returnees who spent more than one year abroad (but since the amount of additional funding for returning nationals is equal to that for newly arrived migrant children, often official statistics does not differentiate between the two). However, not all schools are aware of such opportunities, and consequently apply for funding (even if they have returnee pupils who lived abroad for more than one year)⁶. In Estonia returnees are counted according to school's application for local government and/or returnee student status in the Estonian Education Information System. In Latvia, the data on returnees is collected through local educational administrations. However, there are reported cases of not even school administration being informed that they have returnees in the school.

For the purposes of this policy brief, these three groups of children (defined in the boxes above) are united under one general term '**pupils with a migrant background**',

since all of them have experienced a migration process or inherited a different cultural and linguistic profile as a result of previous generations' migration processes⁷.

⁴The reasons for immigration vary and include all the bases for granting a residence permit under the Estonian Aliens Act, the bases for staying in the country under the Citizen of the European Union Act and the bases for granting a residence permit under the Act on Granting International Protection to Aliens.

⁵The three year limit is applied only in the context of educational support system for financial reasons.

⁶From interviews with representatives of Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, 2014

⁷Or have a different linguistic need due to historical composition of the population in the territory in case of Polish minority in Lithuania.

Context in figures: ethnic minorities, immigrants, returnees

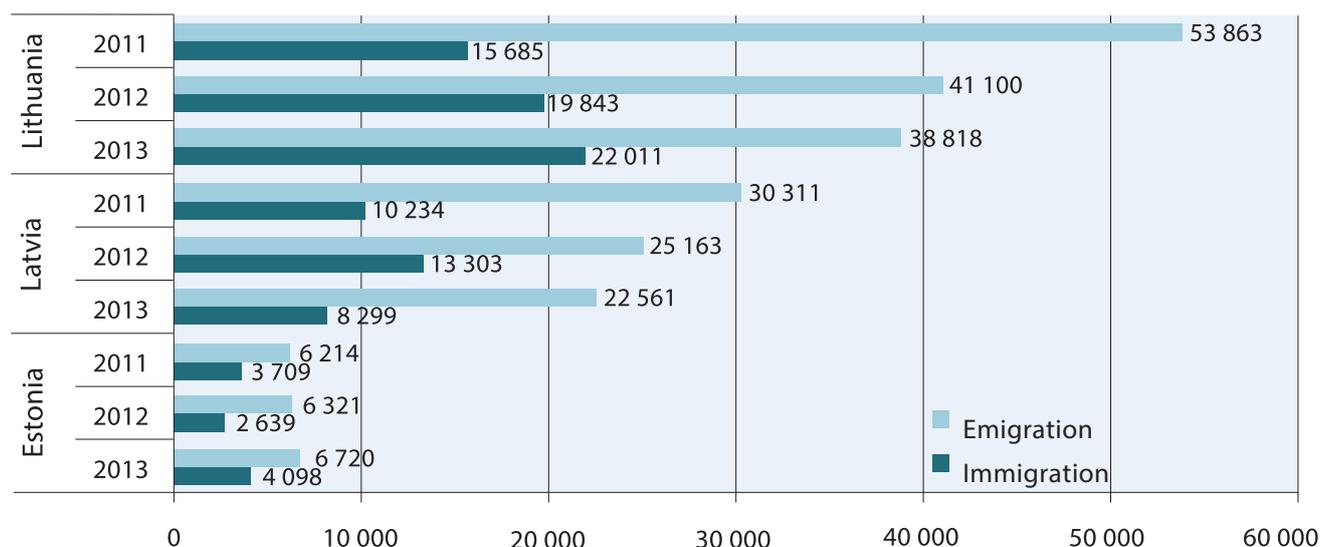
The student body in the Baltic States is becoming more multinational and multicultural. In the academic year 2013/14 in Lithuania, there were more than 7.5% (26 918) (21) pupils who speak a language other than Lithuanian at home. In Estonia, the pupils whose mother tongue is not Estonian or Estonian/Russian form nearly a quarter (24% – 33 895 pupils) of all pupils. In Latvia, the share of children who do not speak Latvian as their first language reached 28% (56 140 pupils).

Historically, the population in the Baltic States has been diverse, due to the earlier immigration waves during 1950–1988. Having been made parts of the Soviet Union in 1940, the Baltic States were subjected to centrally

planned industrialisation after WWII accompanied by high migration flows from other territories of the Soviet Union. Latvia and Estonia both have large historical minority groups – 26% (4) and 25% (45) of the total population respectively. The historical minority in Lithuania is much smaller: 5.8% from Russian origin and outnumbered by the population of Polish origin (6.6% (22) of the total population).

As relatively new European Member states (joined the EU in 2004), the three Baltic countries – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – are among the few EU countries with negative net migration rates (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. External migration in the Baltic States, 2011-2013



Note: As of 1 January 2014, the population of Estonia was estimated to be 1 315 819, the population of Latvia was estimated to be 2 001 500, the population of Lithuania was estimated to be 2 943 472.

Source: EMN Lithuania, 2013; Statistics Estonia, 2013; CSB Latvia, 2014.

Despite the documented low rates of immigration in 2013 to these countries (0.7% in Lithuania (22), 0.4% in Latvia (4) and 0.3% in Estonia (45), which due to incomplete statistical data are expected to be higher, the number of immigrants in Estonia and Lithuania shows a slight increase since 2004 (with the exception of Latvia, where the number of immigrants have been decreasing since 2012⁸), mainly as a consequence of free movement of

labour within the European Union. Finland (26%), Russia (23%) and Ukraine (8%) are the major countries of origin of immigrants in Estonia, while in Lithuania most immigrants are coming from Russia (25%), Belarus (16%) and Ukraine (13%). In Latvia, most immigrants come from Russia (42%), Ukraine (7%) and Uzbekistan (6%) (49). In addition, the data show increase in the inflow of asylum seekers in the Baltic States (52).

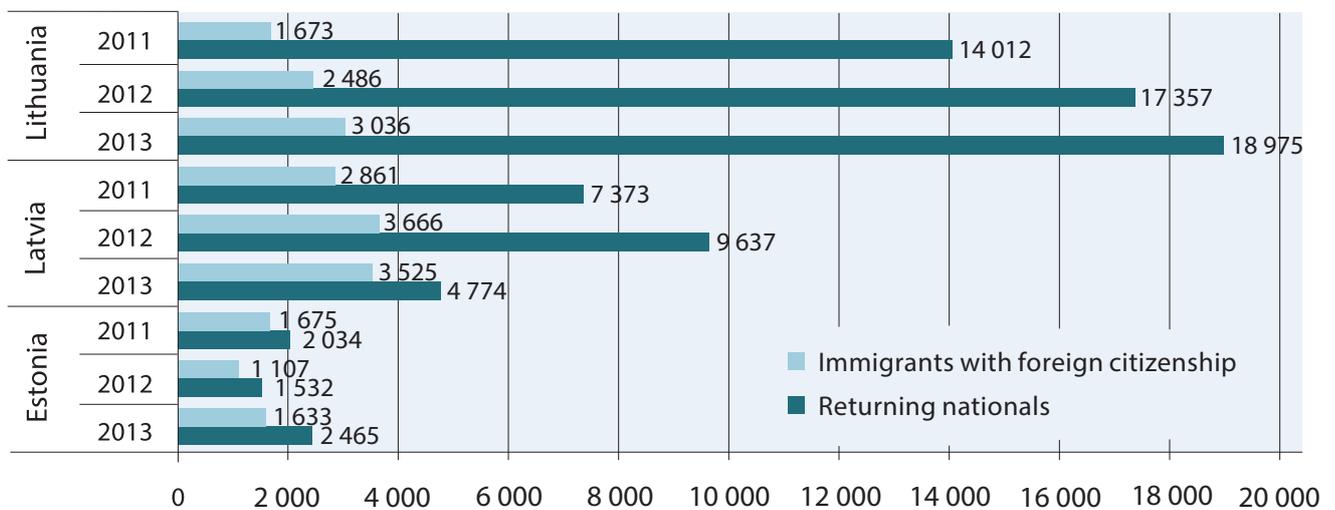
⁸ Most probably, due to the decrease of returning nationals in 2013

It is also notable that returning nationals comprise a bigger part of Baltic countries' population inflow in the recent decades. For example, about 85% of individuals arriving to Lithuania were returning Lithuanian residents (13) and 60% of people crossing the border in Estonia held Estonian citizenship (45) in 2013 (see Figure 2). In Latvia, the situation is more similar to Estonia – according to the data of Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, in 2013, 57.5% of individuals coming to Latvia were Latvian citizens; this figure dropped significantly since 2012 (when

the share of returning nationals was more than 70%).

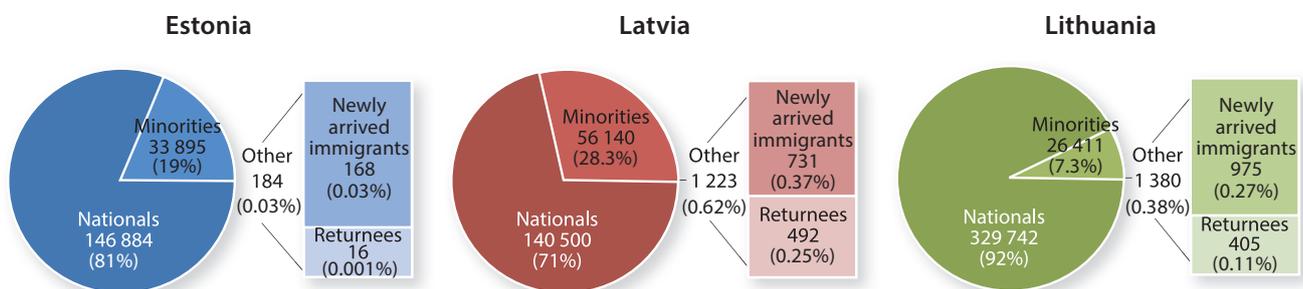
The migration trends described above underline that it is important to distinguish the following pupils' groups in the context of current and future educational needs and policy responses: (1) historical minority pupils (the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia and Estonia and both Russian and Polish-speaking minorities in Lithuania); (2) newly arrived immigrants; and (3) returnees (former residents returning to the Baltic States) (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 2. Immigrant composition in the Baltic States, 2011-2013



Source: EMN Lithuania, 2013; Statistics Estonia, 2013; CSB Latvia, 2014.

FIGURE 3. Pupils' composition in the Baltic States, 2013/2014



Note: the data on newly arrived immigrants is collected based on citizenship status; the data on returnees is collected based on the information provided by the schools (on the schools' application for additional funding in case of Lithuania). Since not all the schools in Lithuania apply for such funding, not all the returnee pupils are eligible to receive it – only the ones who lived abroad for more than one year are eligible – and this number may include newly arrived pupils who applied for extra funding, therefore the current number

is not exact). The data on minority pupils is collected based on ethnicity of citizens (during the population census) in Lithuania and based on the mother tongue (other than Estonian or Estonian/Russian and Latvian) in Estonia and Latvia respectively.

Source: EMN Lithuania, 2013; Statistics Estonia, 2013; CSB Latvia and Latvian MoES, 2014.

Historical minority pupils

All Baltic States have a long path of integration of historical minority children in education and a significant num-

ber of minority pupils as part of their school population (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. Historical minority pupils in general education in the Baltic States

Number of pupils	Estonia		Latvia		Lithuania	
	2005/2006	2013/2014	2005/2006	2013/2014	2005/2006	2013/2014
Number of minority pupils in general education	44 024	33 895	78 758 ⁹	56 140 ¹⁰	44 822 ¹¹	26 411 ¹²
Total number of pupils in general education	180 963	140 467	283 947	197 863	538 541	357 530
% of minority pupils	24.3	24.1	28.6	28.4	8.3	7.3

Source: Estonian Education Information System, Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, Lithuanian Statistics Department.

Minority communities are unevenly distributed across the Baltic States' regions. In Estonia, the Russian minority is concentrated in one region – 73% of the population of Ida-Viru County (north-eastern region) is formed by the Russian-speaking community while in Tallinn, the capital, they constitute more than a third of the population (37%). In Latvia and Lithuania, the historical minority population is rather scattered across the country. In Latvia, the Russian ethnic group is concentrated in the biggest cities – Daugavpils (52%), Rezekne (47%), Riga (40%), Liepaja (32%) (49). In Lithuania, Visaginas (52%), Klaipeda (28%) and Vilnius (14%) have the biggest share of Russian minority. The Polish minority is concentrated in Vilnius district (52%) and Šalčininkai district (78%) (south-east Lithuania). Historically, in order to accommodate the rights of minority groups in the education system among all three countries, the parallel system of schools with Russian as the language of instruction has been applied. Until regaining independence (in 1991), the school system was separate for different languages. Afterwards, the states initiated reforms to introduce bilingualism to

minority schools (only upper secondary schools in Estonia¹³ and Latvia) in order to facilitate greater integration of these groups into society. Minorities similarly to natives have always had the right to make a choice of school based on their preference. Since the historical minority and traditional immigrants in the Baltic States until recently have been predominantly Russian-speaking, these schools were an effective mechanism of integrating and providing these groups with instruction in their mother tongue. The national curriculum is followed in all schools, with the exception of some subjects: in bilingual schools Russian (or also Polish in the case of Lithuania) language is taught as a mother tongue and Estonian/Latvian/Lithuanian as a state (second) language. The share of instruction in state language and minority language in bilingual schools differs across the Baltic States. In Latvia and Estonia the 60/40 model is used which means that a minimum of 60% of the curriculum at the gymnasium level must be taught in the state language, while in Lithuania schools are required to teach at least 45%¹⁴ of secondary school curriculum in Lithuanian.

⁹ This number includes pupils learning in Russian (77 471), Polish (860), and other foreign languages (427).

¹⁰ This number includes pupils learning in Russian (54 238), Polish (1 102), and other foreign languages – English, Ukrainian, Belarusian, French (800).

¹¹ This number includes Russian minority pupils (26 200), Polish minority pupils (18 473) and Belarusian minority pupils (149).

¹² This number includes Russian minority pupils (14 347), Polish minority pupils (11 884) and Belarusian minority pupils (180).

¹³ Language immersion was also implemented at lower school levels (in Estonia).

¹⁴ In reality, this percentage is bigger (depending on the school), as teachers may integrate the use of Lithuanian language into some subjects which are taught in Russian (from interviews with representatives of Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, 2014).

Newly arrived immigrant pupils

All Baltic States have a relatively low share of newly arrived immigrant pupils in general education institutions (see Table 2). Moreover, the number of newly arrived immigrant pupils has been in constant change even

within the academic year for a variety of reasons, such as high mobility of parents of these pupils and frequent changes in the legal status.

TABLE 2. Share of newly arrived immigrant population in general education in the Baltic States

Number of pupils	Estonia		Latvia		Lithuania	
	2007/2008	2013/2014	2008/2009	2013/2014	2005/2006	2013/2014
Number of newly arrived immigrant pupils in general education	56 ¹⁵ /121 ¹⁶	73 ¹⁷ /168 ¹⁸	432	731	364	975
Total number of pupils in general education	161 961	140 467	236 223	197 863	538 541	357 530
% of immigrant pupils	0.03/0.07	0.01/0.12	0.18	0.37	0.07	0.27

Source: Estonian Education Information System, Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, Lithuanian Statistics Department.

Most newly arrived immigrant pupils are scattered across schools, although distributed unevenly across the regions, in all Baltic States. However, in Lithuania nearly 70% of immigrant children attend Russian minority

schools due to their greater experience in accommodating diversity and a big share of traditional Russian-speaking immigrants in Lithuania (41). A similar trend has been observed in Latvia¹⁹.

Returnee pupils

Of the three Baltic States, Lithuania has been most active in implementing special policy measures to welcome its residents back in the country. In Lithuania, returnees

were the biggest group coming back to the country since the collapse of the USSR, which shaped the tradition of educational support specifically to this group.

¹⁵ Data from Estonian Information Education System: based on state financial support received by school application which means that they have received additional language lessons.

¹⁶ Data from Estonian Information Education System: based on the notion "newly arrived immigrant" background (does not necessarily include financial support by the state).

¹⁷ Data from Estonian Information Education System: based on state financial support received by school application which means that they have received additional language lessons.

¹⁸ Data from Estonian Information Education System: based on the notion "newly arrived immigrant" background (does not necessarily include financial support by the state).

¹⁹ From interviews with representatives of Latvian Ministry of Education and Science, 2014

The first measure to integrate returning Lithuanians was a special school established (Lietuvu Namai; English: Lithuanian House) as far back as 1990 with an intensive focus on Lithuanian language instruction and teaching Lithuanian culture and history. Originally the school served the needs of children of Lithuanian exiles and political prisoners during the Soviet times. Now the Lithuanian house is open to all children of Lithuanian origin coming or returning to Lithuania. In 2007 the government of Lithuania adopted an Economic Migration Regulation (EMR) strategy, which defined a structured approach towards migration. The strategic objective of the strategy was to: 1) satisfy labour market needs (targeted at third country nationals) and 2) to encourage Lithuanian emigrants to return to Lithuania. However, the priority focus was granted to the support of Lithuanian migrants and to the attraction of the EU citizens to Lithuania. In the light of the changing economic situation and the assessment of the effectiveness of EMR strategy further steps to adjust the strategy and its objectives were taken. Spending cuts in the public sector, as well as a decrease of the support from the EU structural funds complicated the situation. The new EMR implementation plan was not approved and in December 2009 during the meeting of the Economic Commission for Migration Affairs a new strategy “Global Lithuania” was adopted (2).

The most recent strategy on the integration of returnees and Lithuanians living abroad foresees financial support of additional 30% of the regular pupils’ basket for the period of one year for each returnee who has spent more than one year abroad. Other measures include availability of linguistic support such as weekend classes, bridging classes and online learning for Lithuanians leaving abroad and intercultural education support such as weekend lessons for returning Lithuanian children in schools (2). There are a number of schools in Lithuania (such as Lietuviu Namai) that offer qualified language support through integration classes and/or groups for returnees who do not speak fluent Lithuanian. Prior to returning to Lithuania, families can apply for the online distant courses (provided by some schools, e.g. Ozo school) which provide Lithuanian language support and induction programmes to facilitate their re-integration (41). Currently, a research project is being carried out in Lithuania, which aims (among others) to assess the state of integration of returnees’ children in Lithuanian schools and the effectiveness of the applied measures (32).

Estonia has also developed some measures that could potentially facilitate pupils’ transition to the Estonian education system. For instance, Estonia has developed an e-course called Keeleklikk (18) designed to introduce Estonian history and culture, and support independent learning of the Estonian language at A level (supporting languages English and Russian) in terms of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The Estonian diaspora programme also finances language and culture camps which introduce Estonia to young Estonians residing abroad (13–18 year olds). Participation in these camps can be helpful for smoother transi-

tions into the Estonian education system. Another good example is a 10-hour Estonian language e-course (8) for children aged 6–10 living outside Estonia based on the national curriculum. This free course is designed to maintain and develop the Estonian language skills among the community that resides temporarily abroad. The systematic study of the Estonian language, primarily targeted to children who may return to Estonia and wish to continue their education in Estonia, is offered by Miskike tutor paid service (24). Lessons with a tutor take place using Skype and a special interactive study platform with the aim of a child’s Estonian language skills to correspond to the level of Estonian schools.

In Latvia, current political initiatives to target the problem of depopulation are devoted to re-emigration programmes, mainly targeting the Latvian nationals who have emigrated since the year 2000. In 2013 the Ministry of Economics of Latvia in collaboration with other ministries, NGOs and social partners developed a “Re-emigration Support Plan 2013–2016” to attract the return of at least 120,000 Latvian nationals by 2030. Among eight main support measures, two are focused on the Latvian language learning (support for learning Latvian after returning to Latvia for all family members of Latvian nationals), and (re)integration of returnees’ children into the national education system (support for school children who return, to introduce to the Latvian education system and support to their parents – improvement and broadening of existing support mechanism) (35). As the return policy is still at the development stage in Latvia, it is too early to evaluate any achieved goals and functionality of initiated actions.

National policy approaches towards the education of children with a migrant background

In the Baltic countries, education policy and integration of people with a migrant background falls under the **responsibility of different ministries** (see Table 3).

Moreover, different ministries are involved in the integration strategies in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

TABLE 3. Responsibilities of Ministries for integration of people with a migrant background in the Baltic States

Respective Ministry	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Ministry of Cultural Affairs	Main areas: culture policy and integration policy, partner for implementation of the Estonian diaspora programme <i>Main documents: "The Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia 2020"</i>	Main areas: Implementation of the core national level integration policy, Administration of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in Latvia. <i>Main documents: "Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy (2012–2018)"</i>	Main areas: Implementation of the state policy in the field of national minorities <i>Main documents: Strategy for Development, Action Plan for Integration of the Roma community into the Lithuanian society for 2012–2014</i>
Ministry of Education and Research (EE) Ministry of Education and Science (LT, LV)	<i>Main areas: education policy, language policy, leader of the Estonian diaspora programme</i> <i>Main documents: "Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020" and the "Development Plan of the Estonian Language 2011–2017"</i>	Main areas: education policy, language policy <i>Main documents: "Guidelines of the State Language Policy for 2005–2014"; "Guidelines for Education Development policy 2014–2020"; "The Action plan for the enhancement of social cohesion in education area (2012–2014)"</i>	Main areas: education policy, language policy <i>Main documents: Lithuanian Education Strategy for the period of 2013–2022</i>
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Main areas: migration policy, development and implementation of a new adaptation programme aimed at newly arrived immigrants ²⁰ <i>Main documents: Adaptation programme for newly arrived immigrants (under construction)</i>	Main areas: migration policy (visa policy, immigration, asylum, refugees, naturalisation procedure); Administration of the European Refugee Fund programmes in Latvia <i>Main documents: Immigration Law, Law on Citizenship, Repatriation Law, Law of Stateless Persons, Asylum Law</i>	Main areas: state regulation of migration; state policy in the areas of visas, immigration, asylum and citizenship procedures of the Republic of Lithuania <i>Main documents: Law on the Legal Status of Aliens, No 85-4450, 2012. Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Citizenship, No 144-7361, 2010</i>
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour	Main areas: Labour market policy, EURES Estonia website	Main areas: Labour market policy	Main areas: integration of asylum seekers; regulation of economic migration; Administration of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and European Refugee Fund programmes in Lithuania
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Main areas: foreign policy, international relations, partner in the Estonian diaspora programme	Main areas: Diaspora policy, foreign policy <i>Main documents: The Action plan for cooperation with Diaspora (2015–2017)</i>	Main areas: foreign policy, diaspora policy <i>Main documents: Global Lithuania Strategy (for diaspora policy)</i>
Ministry of Economy (LT, LV) Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication (EE)		Main areas: return migration policy, employment policy for returnees <i>Main documents: "Return migration Support Plan 2013–2016"</i>	

²⁰The programme provides new arrivals with relevant basic knowledge and language skills in order to facilitate effective adaptation and further integration.

As seen from Table 3, the responsibilities of different ministries in the Baltic States are interrelated and require inter-ministerial cooperation, which does not always happen (31).

Currently, the education policy approaches towards the integration of children with a migrant background in the Baltic States are rather divergent, partly shaped by a different and relatively small number of newly arrived immigrants and returnees in the student body. Comparing the three countries in the general education index compiled by MIPEx in 2010, Estonia is the most advanced among the Baltic States in providing education support to newly arrived immigrants, scoring 50 (out of 100), while Latvia and Lithuania scored only 17 (48). Disaggregating the index into four main education indicators (access, targeting needs, new opportunities and intercultural education for all), the situation in the three countries appears rather dissimilar (see Figure 4).

Currently, the focus of education policies in the Baltics has been on **specific measures** targeted to accommodate needs of children with a migrant background (developed to a various extent across the three countries) rather than overall comprehensiveness and implementation of an inclusive approach, which is however, included into the overall policy discourse (42). The specific targeted measures for pupils with a migrant background currently implemented in the Baltics are presented below (see Table 4).

FIGURE 4. Comparison of Baltic States according to the MIPEx education integration scores (2010).

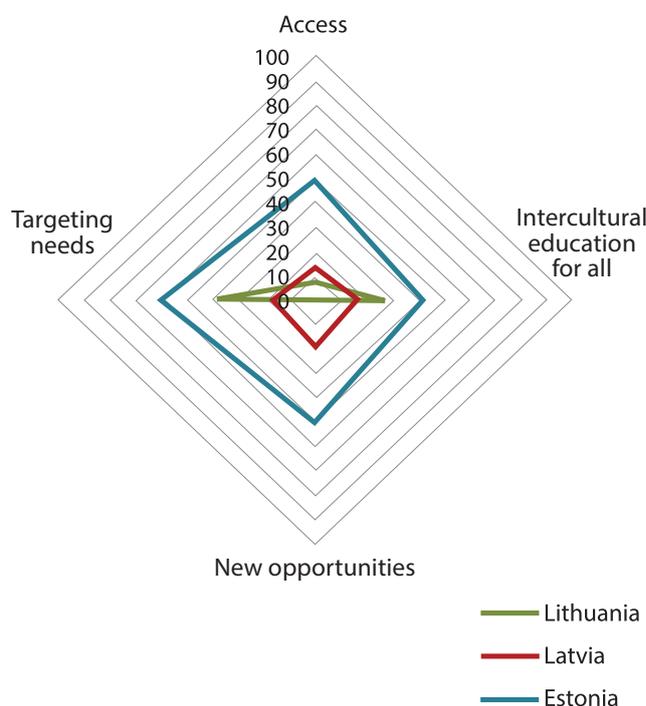


TABLE 4: Specific measures on targeted support to pupils with a migrant background available in the Baltics

Targeted support	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Access and support	General education of good quality is equally available to every person regardless of ethnic, religious, citizenship or special educational needs background (3: §6).	100% support to children entering compulsory education (Z: section 3, Right to education), but not in other levels of education.	Only pupils who have residence permits are entitled to be enrolled into compulsory school (39).
Provision of mother tongue ²¹	At upper secondary (gymnasium) level, the largest number of schools with bilingual studies (using a 60/40 model at upper secondary level) provide Russian as a language of instruction; other languages can be provided upon need and availability of resources: as an optional subject based on parental wish, as an A-foreign language or in Sunday-schools of national minorities. Availability of international curricula options (mostly private with high tuition fees).	Russian is provided constantly in bilingual schools (with a 60/40 model and the upper secondary level); other languages ²² can be provided upon need and availability of resources: as an optional subject based on parental wish or in national minority (private or publicly funded) schools. Availability of international curricula options (mostly private with high tuition fees).	Russian, Polish and Belarusian are provided constantly in bilingual schools (in respective minority school, 45/55 model); other languages can be provided upon need and availability of resources: as an optional subject based on parental wish or extra-curricular activities organised by immigrant groups. Availability of international curricula options (mostly private with high tuition fees).

<p>Funding model</p>	<p>Differentiated pupils' basket for activities: extra 40% for every newly arrived immigrant pupil and 20% for every pupil in a language immersion programme²³ (based on school application). As of 2014, extra 10% for every pupil indicated as returnee or pupil with a language of instruction other than mother tongue (not enrolled in language immersion programme)²⁴.</p>	<p>Refugees and asylum seekers have the right to extra financial support for Latvian language acquisition (36).</p>	<p>Differentiated pupils' basket: (extra 20% for every minority pupil only in minority schools, extra 30% for every immigrant and returnee in every school)²⁵. However, additional funding for returnees and newly arrived immigrant is provided only during their first year at school.</p>
<p>Curriculum flexibility</p>	<p>Individual curriculum serves as a prerequisite for needs-based funding; specific measures used are determined by schools based on needs and availability. The educational counselling services, e.g. a language therapist, social pedagogue and psychologist should be made available to schools.</p>	<p>Intercultural support within schools and informal settings, provided by social pedagogues, youth workers, social workers only on ad hoc grounds (projects, voluntary support). Individual approach based on flexible and specified curriculum and learning plan (6).</p>	<p>Individual curriculum option; mobile groups and classes, schools can also implement additional language hours based on needs and availability.</p>
<p>Intercultural component in curriculum</p>	<p>In the National curriculum for basic schools (26), cultural diversity is stated as one of the important elements among the core values of basic education, tolerance to diversity and people among students is one of the goals set. General competencies deemed important in human development incorporate intercultural approach. Teaching in a multicultural setting is not perceived as a strong professional need among teachers (23).</p>	<p>The cross-cultural competences are included in the National curriculum for primary and secondary schools. The principles of cultural diversity are integrated into different subjects, namely, social sciences, ethics, history, minority language. Teachers have theoretical knowledge on teaching in multicultural settings, but they still recognise the need to improve their practical skills to work with immigrant pupils with different cultures.</p>	<p>Importance of intercultural learning has been emphasised in Education plan 2013/2014. Cultural diversity and awareness are stated as an important learning goal and the principles of cultural diversity are integrated into such learning subjects as history, geography, morals and ethics, citizenship education, etc. (33).</p>
<p>System of Educational Guidance</p>	<p>The Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act stipulates that pupils (children with a migrant background among others) will be provided with the services of support specialists (e.g. psychologist, social educator). The owner of the school has to decide how support services are provided; if these specialists are not among school staff, access to services has to be provided by local government. An evaluation of the educational counselling services showed that all the required services were available at regional counselling centres, while the need for the services at individual schools were not necessarily met (14).</p>	<p>There are no specific educational guidance programmes for pupils financed by state or local governments²⁶. Educational guidance is integrated²⁷ in the common educational process for all groups of pupils (Z: art. 1., 17). As of 2012/2013, schools are allowed to fund the salary of a school guidance counsellor from the national education subsidy, if the schools choose to do so (this depends on the number of pupils and on local priorities) (53).</p>	<p>There is a general system of career guidance and counselling that can be provided at or outside school by Career Information Points (at schools), the Municipal Pedagogical-psychological Services, Career Centres, Youth Information and Technical Creativity Centre. No educational guidance system for teachers on how to support pupils with a migrant background exists.</p>

The effectiveness of specific measures outlined in the table above is challenging to assess due to the lack of available data on the integration of pupils with a migrant background, in particular newly arrived immigrants and returnees. There are data on the amount of these pupils at schools, but it is hard to find data on the educational career of these pupils, including their performance and participation and education path.

While it is problematic to generalise the approach to

education of children with a migrant background in the Baltic States, it appears that the compensatory element is present in all countries. This means that pupils with a migrant background are required to fit into the established national system and targeted measures addressing to support these pupils are predominantly determined by schools. Hence, as the schools possess a great degree of autonomy in applying targeted support measures, the application of the targeted measures heavily depends on a particular school's readiness.

Baltic challenges and initiatives in the education of pupils with a migrant background

Policy challenges and experience in the field of integration into the education of pupils with a migrant background in the Baltic States are rather similar, although a variety of nuances in approaches to policy have led to differences in good practice examples of the three countries. All three countries have a largely similar experience

for policy design and implementation in the situation of having a rather small newly arrived immigrant pupil population, a considerable historical minority pupil population (mostly Russian, Lithuania being an exception, where the Polish minority is the largest), and the most recently emerged and growing pupil group – returnees.

Lack of clear conceptual framework and data on pupils with a migrant background

Lack of clarity and consistency in definitions used in the migrant education policy context makes the analytical comparison complicated, as described above. At the same time, the legislative framework for migrant education in the Baltic countries is rather similar, enabling the school level a considerable amount of independence for decision-making on the choice of support mechanisms for pupils with a migrant background. However, it appears that autonomy in decision-making which assumes

responsibility from schools' side is not always appreciated as the majority of institutions and school professionals are not necessarily prepared to welcome diversity and support pupils with a migrant background. Lack of systematic data collection on the integration of pupils with a migrant background makes it complicated to assess the effectiveness of current policy measures and individual school approaches towards it.

²¹ Mother tongue instruction mostly occurs in bilingual education settings in formal education both in primary and upper secondary schools. In Latvia and Lithuania it is organised according to legal provision (Education Law) in so called minority education programmes, implemented by schools, holding significant number of pupils with certain minority background.

²² e.g. Ukrainian, Polish, Roma, Lithuanian, Estonian, Yiddish, Belarusian.

²³ Language immersion is a form of studies that is being implemented as a national programme in Estonia for better acquisition of Estonian as the second language (almost half non-Estonian schools apply language immersion methods) (11).

²⁴ This information on pupil status is obtained from the Estonian Information Education System.

²⁵ This funding allows schools the implementation of policies such as integration classes, bilingual education, continuous instruction of Lithuanian as a second language, and mother tongue instruction. There is a possibility to organise an integration class (which theoretically can be introduced in every school if there are at least five migrant pupils); however, in most of the cases schools lack financial resources to maintain it. Currently, integration class is available only in 'Lietuviu namai' (42).

²⁶ The State Education Development Agency's Information and Career Guidance Department is the main institution devoted to developing recommendations and tools for improving guidance in schools, including information on education opportunities, occupational descriptions and on-line career self-assessment tests.

²⁷ Careers education at schools is integrated into subject lessons and class lessons and can be a topic for project week activities and field trips. Teachers can freely organise their lessons and choose methods as long as curriculum objectives are achieved. Additionally, schools are encouraged to elaborate and implement the specific career guidance programmes. Another instrument of career guidance is National Education Opportunities data base (Available at: www.niid.lv)

Scale effect of the current policy measures

A problem accompanied with this approach is the scale effect: in Lithuania and in Estonia, extra funding is available to address the needs of pupils with a migrant background. In other words, the financial support allocated by the state to schools is per each pupil. This means that the schools with a relatively large number of pupils with a migrant background receive much greater support compared to those with a small number of these pupils which enables the former to apply a wider range of support measures leaving the options for the latter rather limited. Hence, the current measures due to their inflexibility clearly favour schools with large population of pupils with a migrant background even though all general education institutions are assumed to be prepared to enrol such pupils. Latvia faces a somewhat

different situation in which there are no targeted measures for a school upon the enrolment of newly arrived immigrant or returnee pupils. The school funding is based on the overall pupil number (on per capita basis), but additional support, such as adaptation or the national language learning, is not covered. However, there are regulations (36, 37) which require the school to provide Latvian lessons during the adaptation period for the newcomers²⁸. The adaptation period for which additional Latvian lessons are provided for foreign pupils is not specified in the regulation. The school administration is responsible for the decision concerning the individual support measures (consultations, Latvian lessons, etc.) without any access to additional funding and its duration as well as taking into account the needs of each pupil (38).

Uneven level of preparedness of schools

The current policy framework enables schools' independence and responsibility to choose the approach best suited to meet the needs of an individual pupil with a migrant background. That assumes well-prepared teachers and other school professionals that are competent to recognise and facilitate individual needs and educate in diverse settings. Such schools can be found in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Unfortunately, these examples are exceptions rather than common practice. Since schools possess a great degree of autonomy in applying targeted

support measures, the application of the targeted measures heavily depends on a particular school's readiness. This approach has created a somewhat national disparity in preparedness of schools to meet the needs of pupils with a migrant background, in particular newly arrived immigrant and returnee pupils, as the experience varies from successful practices to having no contact at all with these pupils between general education institutions in all Baltic States.

Inconsistent pre-service training for diverse environments

Research confirms that well-prepared teachers matter more to pupils' achievement and success than any other aspect of schooling (34) and even more so for pupils with a migrant background (25). However, the teaching profession still remains undervalued in Europe and teachers do not receive proper training and feedback (12). In addition, in many OECD school systems teachers report a pressing need for more support for addressing diversity issues in their classrooms (30). The OECD (2010) also highlights the need for diversity training among teachers (28).

Insufficient and inconsistent training of teachers to deal with pupils' diversity extends the gap in the current approach in the Baltic States. Development of multicultural competencies in pre-service teacher training is not a compulsory element, but can be chosen as an elective course by future teachers. Nevertheless, good examples of pre-service teacher training curriculum design include inclusive learning competences in Estonia at the University of Tartu (51). Vilnius Pedagogical University recently introduced the diversity theme in Lithuania as an elective (44).

²⁸ The adaptation programmes and the Latvian language learning programmes for immigrants (available also online free of charge for group and individual work). Here, the Adaptation programme for third country nationals' children aged from six to 12 and the Latvian language learning programme for third country nationals' children aged from 13 to 18, both developed by the Latvian Language Agency, should be mentioned.

Unsystematic in-service training

In-service training mechanisms in the Baltics also lack consistency and regularity. There are indications in all the Baltic States that teachers perceive the need to have more competence to deal with and be aware of pupils' educational special needs and use appropriate support methods²⁹. In Lithuania, for instance, there is no systematic preparation of language teachers working with non-

Lithuanian speakers, with the exception of scarce random workshops and projects (41). A good practice example is the Lituianistic model for education, being developed in cooperation by researchers and practitioners to support teachers dealing with diversity through the online platform and methodological material.

Vytautas the Great University is now developing a new Lituianistic model for education, which aims to create a teacher handbook for teachers how to deal with different pupils – this includes materials, practices, guidelines for teacher of Lithuanian as a foreign language. This also may solve the problem of incidental immigrant enrolment at school. When a teacher feels a necessity he/she can just apply to the programme and receive necessary support. Project is devoted for teachers teaching Lithuanian language for foreigners or Lithuanian children who are coming back from foreign countries and those who live abroad. The project has also created an online platform where teachers can share and exchange their practices. However, during project implementation teachers faced additional challenges that would need further training and solutions.

A number of courses on intercultural competence building as in-service training are offered in Latvia³⁰. During these courses methodological and educational materials on intercultural communication and dialogue, diversity management and bilingual education provided not only for teachers, but also for other practitioners working with newly arrived immigrant population, have been developed during the last few years by the NGO Education Development Centre³¹, the Latvian Language Agency (state agency) (20: section "Teaching and learning Latvian"), the Latvian Centre for Human Rights (NGO) (47) and other NGOs. Even though the current teacher training model may equip teachers with some competences, it does not include a systematic preparation for working with migrant pupils.

For the need of appropriate teachers' in-service training to be addressed, it is essential that first teachers identify what competencies they are lacking or evaluate their competence level adequately which, as practice shows,

is not always being done (50). Second, the implementation and application of knowledge and competence acquired through in-service training among teachers is complex. Third, schools with relatively low numbers of newly arrived immigrant and returnee pupils are not motivated to prioritise the need for preparedness to deal with these pupils, partly because of the current funding scheme. Fourth, the state might have its own (other) priorities for in-service teacher training, such as, using the Estonian example, topics related to new curriculum implementation or development of pupils' general competencies. Therefore, teacher preparedness, strengthening a research-based approach in teaching and shaping attitudes among school professionals is not supported by the unsystematic and unregulated in-service training in the field. The positive trend of a high in-service training participation rate in the Baltic States does not necessarily translate into the quality and application of competencies in the teaching profession (44).

²⁹ For Estonia: 17; for Lithuania: 42 - National analysis report of Lithuania; for Latvia: 42 - National analysis report of Latvia

³⁰ NGOs, governmental Latvian Language agency, and National Education Centre offer course on intercultural competence building financed from the state budget or EU funds

³¹ For example, the material for teachers "[Communication, diversity, tolerance](#)"; the methodological material "[Intercultural communication](#)".

Teacher networks can be a potential mechanism for identifying in-service education and training needs, organising training sessions as well as providing training courses. These networks are active in Estonia and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research has expressed readiness to facilitate teacher networks for professional

development and to stimulate practice-based learning space driven by teacher needs (14). However, in Latvia and in Lithuania teacher networks for professional development appear to be not very active; nonetheless, teachers have expressed interest in becoming more active in professional network activities (44).

Unsystematic cooperation between different stakeholders

Apart from individual schools' good practices, Baltic States lack a systematic approach towards ensuring positive learning environment and engagement of parents. Lack of cooperation is visible not only at the schools level, but also between policymakers and schools and individual teachers, which undermines the effective use of evidence coming from practice, when designing specific policies on migrant education. The Lithuanian NGO Centre for Equality Advancement initiated a project "My student is a foreigner (5), which implemented a set of seminars for teachers from all over Lithuania with the involvement of experts and policymakers. However, this practice was a one-off project, rather than continuous mainstreamed activity.

The main challenges, current status, policy gaps and needs in education of pupils with a migrant background in the Baltics are summarised in Table 5.

In a situation where the number of pupils with diverse cultural and linguistic background is growing, the national approach is not implemented to its full potential. Therefore, the current policy approach may be perceived as rather vague which means that specific policy initiatives do not translate into successful results. Moreover, schools find that public policy towards pupils with a migrant background does not seem to be defined and structured clearly. Perceived challenges in implementing the national approach in education of newly arrived immigrant and returnee pupils are related primarily to the school level and classroom level challenges and do not always include the scarce financial resources. The challenges involve shortcomings in preparation of school professionals to work in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms; weak points in the preparedness of schools to educate pupils with a migrant background and to address diversity and individual differences; and unsystematic cooperation within and between various levels of the education and policy sectors.

TABLE 5. Common challenges, gaps and needs in migrant education policy in the Baltic States

	Challenge	Current status	Gap	Need	Particular importance to
1.	Clear definitions of pupils with a migrant background	Baltic countries apply different definitions when developing education policies for immigrants (immigrant, alien, newly arrived immigrant (in EE).	No consistency in definitions across the Baltic States, which is confusing when interpreting comparative data	Adjusting definitions, introducing official classifications according to the time of arrival that would differentiate immigrants, minorities and returnees	All pupil groups
2.	Insufficient data on pupils with a migrant background	Data are collected on enrolment rate, migrant background group (ethnic minority, newly arrived immigrant, returnee) to a various extent	Missing detailed data on academic achievement, career paths differentiated by migrant background group	Broken down data according to specific background factors (years lived in the country, performance by migrant background group) that allows to track educational outcomes	Returnees and newly arrived immigrant pupils
				Linking educational data to other state registries that might hold some other important data, e.g. information on residence status but also unemployment, etc.	
3.	Current measures favour schools with large number of pupils with a migrant background	Targeted measures determined by schools as money allocated per migrant pupil (EE, LT)	Funding arrangements lack flexibility	Supplementary funding not heavily dependent on the newly arrived immigrant / returnee pupil number and consider the minimal educational and individual needs of pupil population. Alternatively, provision of support measures to migrant pupils at regional scale, such as support measures for several schools in a region with a small migrant student population	newly arrived immigrant pupils, returnees
4.	Uneven level of preparedness among schools to educate migrant pupils, while addressing diversity and individual differences	The current legislation encourages compensatory approach and enables flexibility (e.g. individual curriculum), strategies promote inclusive approach	Notable differences between schools on their compensatory approach from extensive experience and successful application of various measures to the schools with lack of resources and competence	All schools have operational strategies for teaching pupils with a migrant background: the role and responsibility of all school professionals in order to create a cohesive and supportive organisational culture; educational counselling system at regional level	newly arrived immigrant pupils, returnees
		Policy framework enables schools independence and responsibility to choose the approach best suited for a migrant pupil			
		Very few schools have operational strategies for teaching pupils with various language and cultural backgrounds	Schools' inability and incompetence to realise potential of professional staff and support measures provided to a considerable extent	Increased technical preparedness of school professionals combined with shaping attitudes and strengthening research-based approach to teaching	

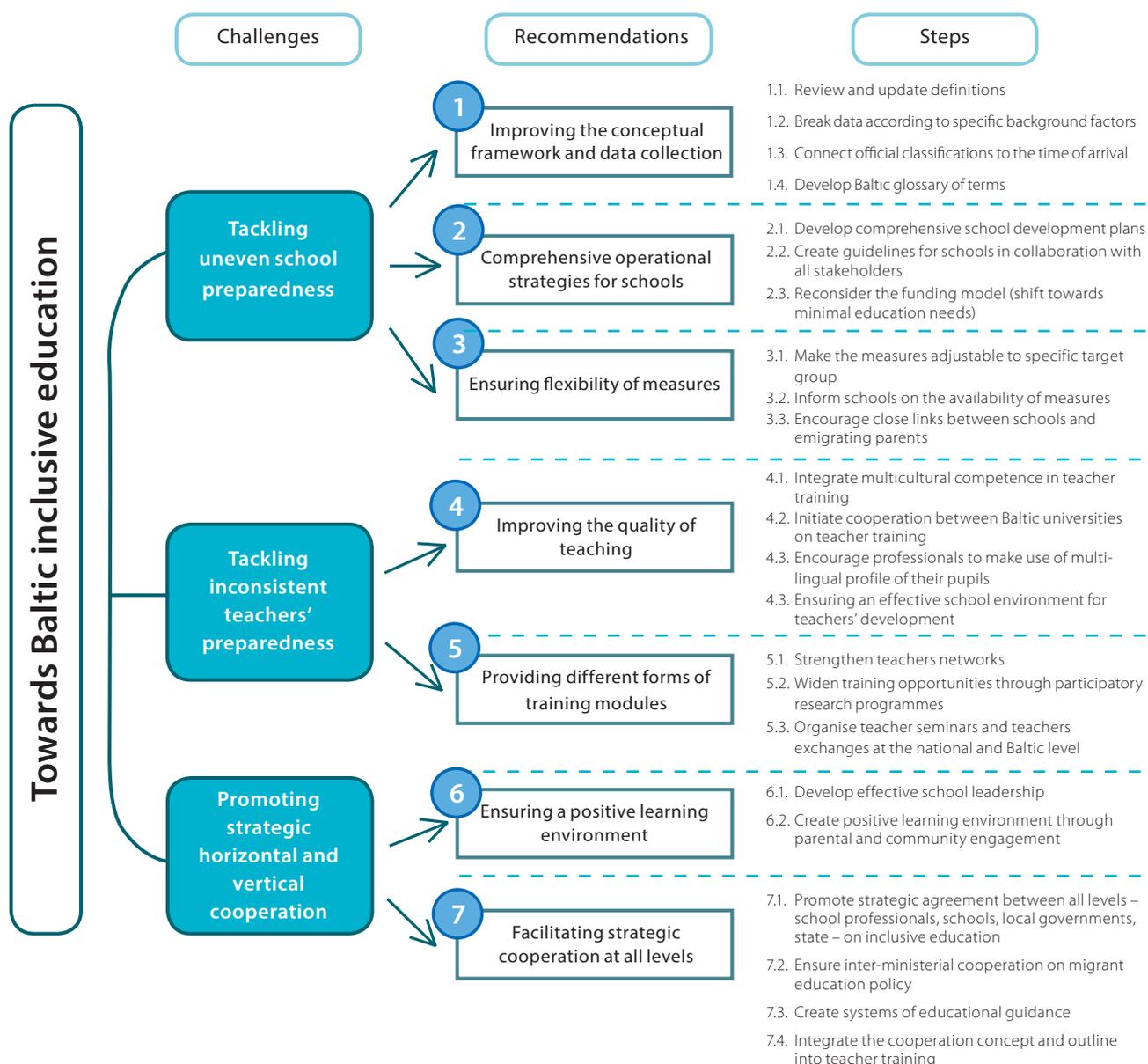
5.	Teacher pre-service training model does not include systematic preparation for working with migrant pupils	Current model provides inconsistently inclusive learning competencies and elective courses	Current model does not prepare school professionals to work in culturally and linguistically diverse classroom	Systematic preparation in pre-service training to provide teachers with multicultural competencies	All pupil groups
6.	Teachers' in-service training is incoherent	In-service training participation rate is high	In-service training system is unsystematic and unregulated; the quality and application of competencies is uncertain and problematic; lack of training opportunities on cultural diversity	Systematic preparation in pre-service training to provide teachers with multicultural competencies	All pupil groups
			Lack of clarity about in-service training needs	Comprehensive mapping of in-service training needs and monitoring of training quality	
			Participation in trainings does not necessarily translate into learning	Educational counselling services at regional level and availability of necessary assistance both inside and outside school	
			A lack of the centrally coordinated in-service training system which allows creating a common organisational culture	Opportunities for mutual learning and cooperation between educational institutions and using the potential of teacher networks for professional development	
7.	Cooperation within and between various levels of education is unsystematic	Varying quality of educational opportunity and support system with unsystematic cooperation between schools and teachers	Unsystematic solutions related to migrant education and in-service training for school professionals	A strategic agreement between all levels – school professionals, schools, local governments, countries – that involves activities, roles and responsibility of all parties to implement inclusive approach	All pupil groups
			Uneven, mostly weak parental and community involvement	To facilitate parental and local community involvement	

Making Baltic inclusive education a reality: policy recommendations

Baltic countries face the situation in which slightly more than a quarter of the pupil population in general education institutions in Estonia and Latvia and nearly a fifth of the student body in Lithuania speak a language (at home or as mother tongue) other than the official language in the country. These groups are formed by pupils with different linguistic and cultural background, which imply their different needs. Even though all the countries appear to continue the current compensatory approach towards inclusive education, some common challenges call for at-

tention. Systematic regional cooperation in the Baltics using good practices examples from the three countries can facilitate achievements for the Baltic States if implemented appropriately.

All the challenges presented above can be summarised into three groups: tackling uneven school preparedness, tackling inconsistent teachers' training and promoting strategic horizontal and vertical cooperation; which require a specific set of steps to address them (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5. Policy recommendations towards inclusive Baltic education systems

The steps to be taken for bringing forward the reality of inclusive education in the Baltic States include:

Improving conceptual framework and data collection

- **Review and update of definitions and statistical data collection** currently used in national education databases in order to receive a clear overview of the number and characteristics of pupils with a migrant background in need of additional support measures. An examination of terms and data collection has to consider the current migration policy in the countries.
- Additionally, for analytical purposes, it is necessary to create opportunities to **differentiate the data according to specific background factors** that en-

able tracking educational outcomes of pupils with a migrant background. This appears as necessary for designing appropriate policy responses.

- Ideally, the definitions and data collected would be adjusted to match across the Baltic States to ensure comparability and coherence, especially given that definitions of immigrants used within the EU vary and are incoherent. **It is appropriate to introduce official classifications and definitions that are connected to the time of arrival** in order to differentiate

immigrants, minorities and returnees. This way the nature of the status can be better reflected in the definition. It appears to be appropriate to differentiate between 'newly arrived immigrants' and 'old immigrants' as is applied in Estonia.

- Development of a **Baltic glossary of terms** would facilitate mutual understanding in discussions and partnership in migration topics across Baltic borders.

Promoting comprehensive operational strategies for schools

- While schools are eligible for extra state funding (e.g. in Estonia and Lithuania), there is a clear need for **all schools to have operational strategies integrated into the school development plans for teaching pupils with various language and cultural background**. Fractional shares of newly arrived immigrant and returnee pupils in the pupil body explain why the main priorities of education policy may lie elsewhere, for example in the successful implementation of new curriculum or in enhancing pupil engagement in Estonia. However, it is important to acknowledge the necessity to be prepared to teach in diverse classrooms as the need may arise. Moreover, there is a clear link between current education policy priorities and the improvement in education strategies of pupils with a migrant background. Successful implementation of new curriculum and increased pupil engagement are achieved with involving every pupil regardless their background and teacher's competence to benefit from diversity in classroom in teaching process.
- **The strategies should involve the role and responsibility of all school professionals**, including teachers, support services and school management in

order to create a cohesive and supportive organisational culture. **A set of guidelines developed by Ministries of Education in collaboration with schools, universities and educational support agencies** to be adjusted according to professionals' needs in a school curriculum could be the first step for the development of an inclusive school system. Better yet, the set of basic guidelines can be prepared in partnership within all Baltic States.

- **Supplementary funding should** not be heavily dependent on the number of pupils with a migrant background and instead **consider the minimal educational needs and support to all education institutions upon need** (e.g. additional staff members or printing multi-language books). If the funding arrangements continue lacking flexibility, as is the case with the current policy framework, the measures keep favouring schools with a high population of pupils with a migrant background and facilitating the uneven level of preparedness among schools to educate these pupils. This may foster resistance among schools with small or no experience to enrol pupils with a migrant background.

Ensuring flexibility of measures

- Given the diverse nature of various pupil groups, the **measures** have to be **flexible to target the needs of a particular pupil group**. It is clear that the group which has received the least attention and special policy measures in Estonia and Latvia is the group of returnees.
- The Lithuanian experience and active implementation of returnee-specific measures provides a valuable source for the other Baltic States to use. It is a good example about how to design additional measures to make its residents return welcoming and keep online national language learning opportunities easily available while abroad. **In addition to language support, these measures should include integration classes/groups, induction programmes and additional funding to the regular pupil's basket per returnee.**
- It is also crucial to ensure that the schools are aware of the support mechanisms they can apply for, e.g. in Estonia and Lithuania there were cases when schools were not aware of possibilities to apply for extra funding for every newly arrived immigrant or returnee.
- School professionals are a valuable source of information and assistance to parents on education opportunities while they are leaving their home country as well as upon their return. Schools can encourage families to keep contact and provide flexible education opportunities (such as distance learning or online assistance if applicable) during a family's stay abroad. This helps to maintain connections and to facilitate the re-emigration process of the family, while expressing attitude of caring and welcome.

Improving quality of teaching

- **The development of professional capacity at schools and improvements in quality of teaching in diverse settings** should be a priority of national education policy in the Baltic States. While universities can demonstrate a few good examples of incorporating multicultural components into their curriculum design to some extent, there is a need for **systematic development of multicultural competence in both teacher pre-service and in-service training**. Systematic preparation provides teachers and other school professionals with multicultural competencies, including competence to recognise and facilitate pupils' educational special needs, communicate with and consult parents, approach diversity as a source of exchange and innovation in order to effectively work in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms.
- A multilingual profile of returnee pupils and newly arrived immigrants should be encouraged in the curriculum. School professionals and subject teachers have to accommodate that need by enabling students in parallel to the national language studies to continue the development of foreign language skills according to the level they have reached abroad. That should be the case also when the level of language skills of a student is particularly different from the rest of student body in a class.
- As the need and policy directions of the education

of pupils with a migrant background are rather similar between the Baltic States, a **training system for educating such pupils should be developed in cooperation between universities** that provides teacher training in all Baltic States and schools with diverse pupil population. This approach has to include the competence of school professionals' that have extensive experience with pupils with a migrant background and enhance the model. A centre of expertise for migrant education and intercultural mediation support in the Baltic States would play a stimulating and coordinating role in this respect. In addition to strengthening individual country responses to the challenge of teacher capacity, the Baltic level pre-service and in-service training module would enhance the strategic priority of internationalisation of higher education in the Baltic countries.

- It is important that the development of professional capital goes hand in hand with the **effective school development** creating a positive school environment for facilitating the quality of teaching, supporting study trips and partnerships among schools, facilitating the exchange of best practices and enabling systematic dialogue and discussions. Effective school development would lead to the establishment of a competent school system in which all professionals have a shared vision on migrant education and professional capacity to implement it.

Providing different forms of training opportunities

- The training system can be implemented in a variety of combined forms. For instance, **collegial support and teacher networks for professional development have a great potential as alternatives to traditional in-service training**, as has been the case in Estonia and recognised by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. Even though teacher networks in Latvia and Lithuania appear not very active, they can be motivated partners in the professional development of teachers.
- **Participatory research programmes** have proven to be an effective form of professional development, which allows, if applied appropriately, teachers to self-reflect and improve their practices. It may be considered to apply the **shared responsibility method during in-service training courses** in which

teacher and training team share responsibility for the process and outcomes of learning. This approach has shown positive results in terms of effectiveness in various countries. In order to facilitate change, it is an important component of teacher training to shape positive attitudes towards diversity and strengthen a research-based approach among teachers and other school professionals.

- The Ministries of Education can also promote teacher learning by **organising regular teacher seminars** on migrant and intercultural education and **facilitating teacher exchanges at national level**, but also between Baltic States.

Ensuring a positive learning environment

- At state level, the centrally coordinated in-service training system allows for creating a common organisational culture which lays a foundation for all school professionals' mutual understanding and support in implementing new knowledge and skills they have acquired in training and hence, promote effective co-operation. **Instructional school leadership has a key role** in leading the team and promoting collaboration, which does not include only management but also requires pedagogical competence. Alternatively, school management can lead the team successfully without pedagogical competence with a presumption that management understands the need for such competence and is willing to bring this competence from the experts into the school.
- The learning environment is proven to be one of the most crucial factors for smooth integration and success of newly arrived immigrant children at school (27). **A supportive learning environment** is created through cooperation between school staff, children and parents and communities. Creating a culture of collaboration, working together, using the collective wisdom and increasing the performance of a team are crucial. It is important that **schools recognise the importance of parental engagement and receive guiding support on how to include parents with a migrant background**. Several success cases among individual schools in Lithuania have succeeded in increasing community involvement by actively engaging immigrant parents through a variety of extra-curricular activities and parental initiatives. These examples should be mainstreamed.

Facilitating strategic cooperation at all levels

- In order to provide pupils with a migrant background with high quality educational opportunities and implement a comprehensive support system, a **strategic agreement between all levels** – school professionals, schools, local governments and the state – that **involves the definition of activities, roles and responsibility of all parties** is needed.
- The strategic diaspora policy system introduced in Lithuania would benefit a comprehensive approach in migrant education policy in Estonia and Latvia. The current approach in which various ministries have implemented activities without set strategic priorities is fragmented, inconsistent and unsustainable.
- **Availability of necessary assistance both inside and outside school** is crucial for raising awareness and developing competence among school staff and parents in order to best address diversity and pupils' individual needs. The system of educational guidance developed in Estonia can serve as a good example. However, the capacity of professionals within this system to provide assistance specifically for newly arrived immigrants is currently being developed. A special group among educational support services staff are language therapists, social pedagogues and psychologists who are expected to conduct student assessments to determine appropriate language and academic support and/or to provide support measures for newly arrived immigrant pupils and parents. At the same time, they may lack professional training and sufficient preparation for it. Foreign language teachers have appropriate preparation for language teaching and often multilingual competence. Currently, the potential of foreign language teachers as a resource for educational support is not realised.
- Moreover, a strategic plan for in-service training among school professionals has to present **coherence and outline how different levels** (e.g. school professionals, local governments, countries) engage and what are their activities, roles and responsibilities in education of pupils with a migrant background, including provision of training. Without this kind of strategic approach, the solutions related to education of pupils with a migrant background, in particular newly arrived immigrants and returnees, and in-service training for school professionals will remain unsystematic.

Conclusions

- Within the framework of an inclusive approach it is important to distinguish the following pupils' groups in the context of current and future educational needs and policy responses in the Baltic States: (1) historical minority pupils; (2) newly arrived immigrants; and (3) returning Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian nationals.
- The focus of education policies in the Baltics has been on specific measures targeted to accommodate the needs of children with a migrant background (developed to a various extent across the three countries), rather than a comprehensive policy approach to migrant education.
- Lack of clarity and consistency in definitions combined with insufficient monitoring in all three countries makes it hard to assess the effectiveness of the current policy approach.
- Baltic countries differ in terms of accessibility of mainstream education for newly arrived immigrant pupils: general education is equally available to every person regardless of ethnic, religious, citizenship or special educational needs background in Estonia, while in Latvia and Lithuania children can freely access only compulsory schooling. The access in Lithuania is restricted even further by the requirement to have a valid residence permit.
- Schools possess a great degree of autonomy in applying targeted support measures, and therefore, the application of the targeted measures heavily depends on a particular school's readiness and willingness. In Estonia and Lithuania (but not in Latvia) supplementary funding to schools depends on the number of pupils with a migrant background, which favours schools with a greater population of migrant pupils and contributes to the disparity of school preparedness to meet the needs of pupils with a migrant background, in particular newly arrived immigrant and returnee pupils in all Baltic States.
- Insufficient and inconsistent pre-service and in-service training of teachers to work in diverse environments extends the gap in the current approach in the Baltic States. Schools' professional capacity, strengthening the research-based approach and shaping attitudes among school professionals is not supported by the unsystematic and unregulated in-service training in the field. All three countries have interesting pilot/one-off good practice examples, which should be mainstreamed.
- Baltic education systems have the potential to become more inclusive if attention is paid to the development of a consistent conceptual framework and system of data collection on pupils with a migrant background, an equally high quality of education in schools regardless of number of pupils with a migrant background, the creation of 'competent' school systems, the development of professional capacity among schools, and a comprehensive support system that connects strategy and collaboration of all levels and parties.
- Baltic cooperation on specific aspects of addressing these challenges has a great potential to play a stimulating and coordinating role in this respect.

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