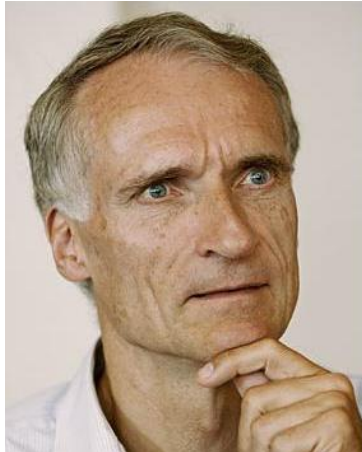




Denmark

Bertel Haarder
Minister for Education and Minister for Nordic Cooperation



Born on 7 September 1944. Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Aarhus. Since 1982 and up till now Mr. Bertel Haarder has been a Minister in Denmark for several different areas. He has served the longest period as Minister for Education (14 years). The other areas for which he has served as Minister have been: Minister for Nordic Cooperation, Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs, Minister for Research, Minister for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs, Minister for Development Cooperation, and Minister for European Affairs. Furthermore Mr. Bertel Haarder has been a Member of the European Parliament from 1994-2001. Since 1975 he has been a member of the Danish Parliament (The Folketing) and from 1999-2001 he was Vice President of and Foreign Policy spokesman for the Group of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party in the European Parliament.

Member of the Parliament for the Liberal Party from 1975-2001 and again from 2005. Member of the European Parliament from 1994-2001..

Challenges in Inclusive Education

Inclusion and democracy are of one piece. Inclusion in special needs education is not only a sign of acceptance of differences or equality, but also a principle for the educational system within a democratic society. All children have the right to receive education - and the right to receive qualified education.

Inclusion is often presented as a principle for ensuring children with special needs the same education in the same settings as other children. Children, however, have different needs and therefore also a need for differentiated education.

Denmark has followed this principle since 1994 Salamanca Statements, and Danish legislation for primary and lower secondary education has underlined the obligations for schools to offer differentiated education according to the need of children.

However, the right of parents to choose the best quality for their children is essential in a modern society. Parents are often well informed about the possibilities within the school system, and they care about the well being of their child, both socially and academically. This is perhaps the reason why we in recent years have seen an increase in the number of parents demanding special needs education for their children in specialised environments. We must to a certain extent accept this development. The challenge is now how to improve the general educational system in order to offer a proper and qualified education to all children. Schools are not only a place to develop socially and personally. It is a place for progression and a place for learning. Children with special needs have the same right as all other children to be challenged and to achieve new competences.

This is why inclusive education must focus more on effectiveness and quality in differentiated education and not just on the organisation of special needs education. We need new research, guidelines and indicators for quality in differentiated education in order to give teachers and schools better educational tools.