



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

**Ministry of Education and Science  
National Centre for Education**

**Special Education in Latvia**



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Law on Education

## Section 1

24) **special education** – general and vocational education adapted for persons with special needs and health problems, or with special needs or health problems



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Law on General Education

- **Special education is a specific type of general education**



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Law on General Education

- Chapter 8 – Special Education
- Section 49
- (2) Special education shall **create the possibilities and circumstances** for students with special needs to acquire education appropriate to their health condition, skills and level of development in any educational institution, concurrently ensuring the pedagogical psychological and medical adjustment of the student and his or her preparation for employment and living in the society.



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Expected Changes to the Law on General Education

- **Special needs** are the need for **appropriate support** and rehabilitation that enable learners with congenital or acquired functional disabilities to participate, according to their health condition, abilities and level of development, in the education process and achieve the requirements set in national education standards
- Availability of adequate **support measures** for learners with special needs who are integrated/included into a general education institution shall be ensured by the educational institution. **Individual education plans** should be developed for every learner with special needs who are included in general education classroom.



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Classification of Educational System in Latvia

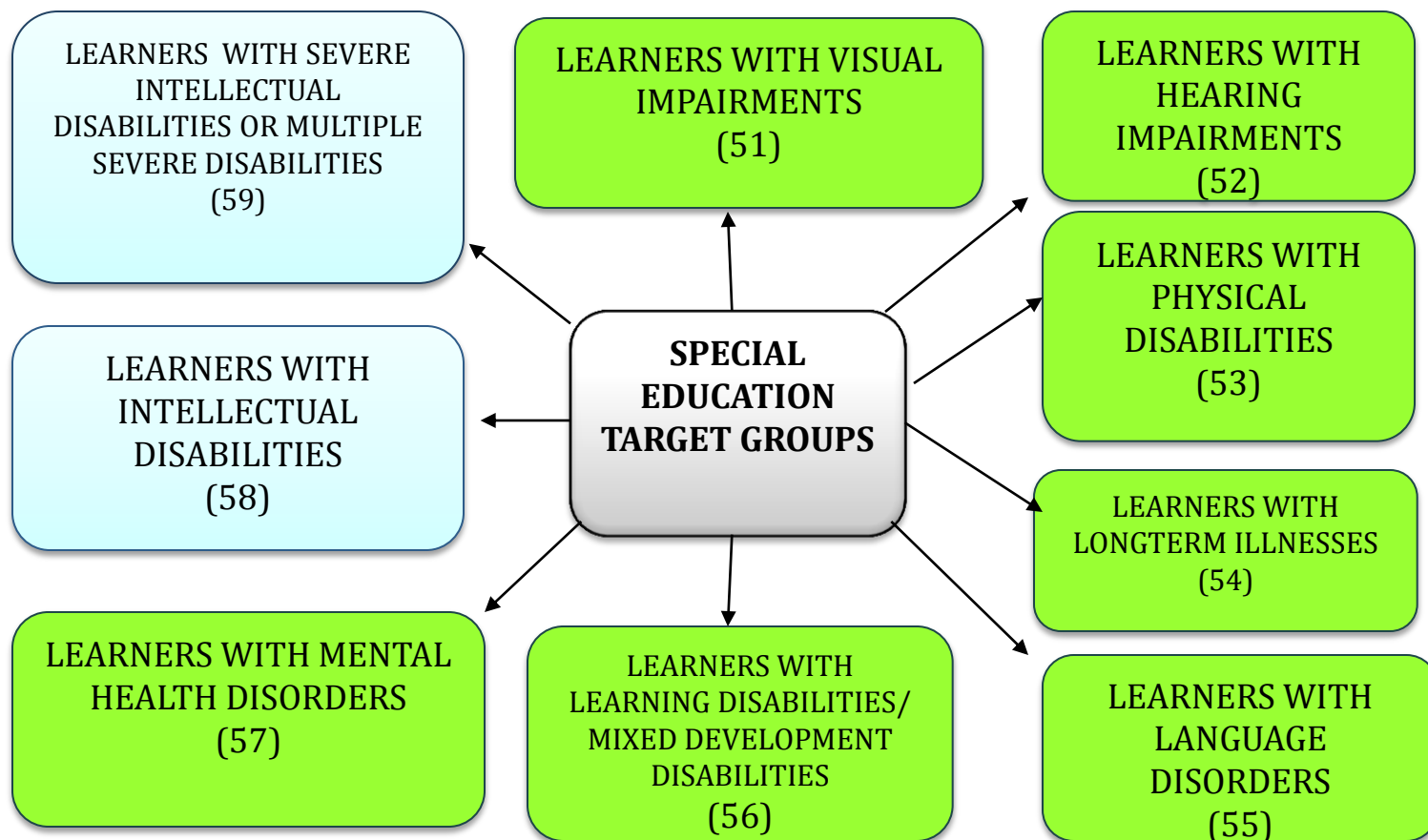
- According to the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers (No.990; 02.12.2009)
- Each programme has a code, where every number reflects specific aspect of the programme
- e.g. 21015811 – 21 means basic education
  - » 01 means general education
  - » 5 means specific kind (special) education
  - » 8 kind of special education (intellectual disabilities)
  - » 11 language and type (day, evening, part time) – Latvian language, day.



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Special Education Target Groups

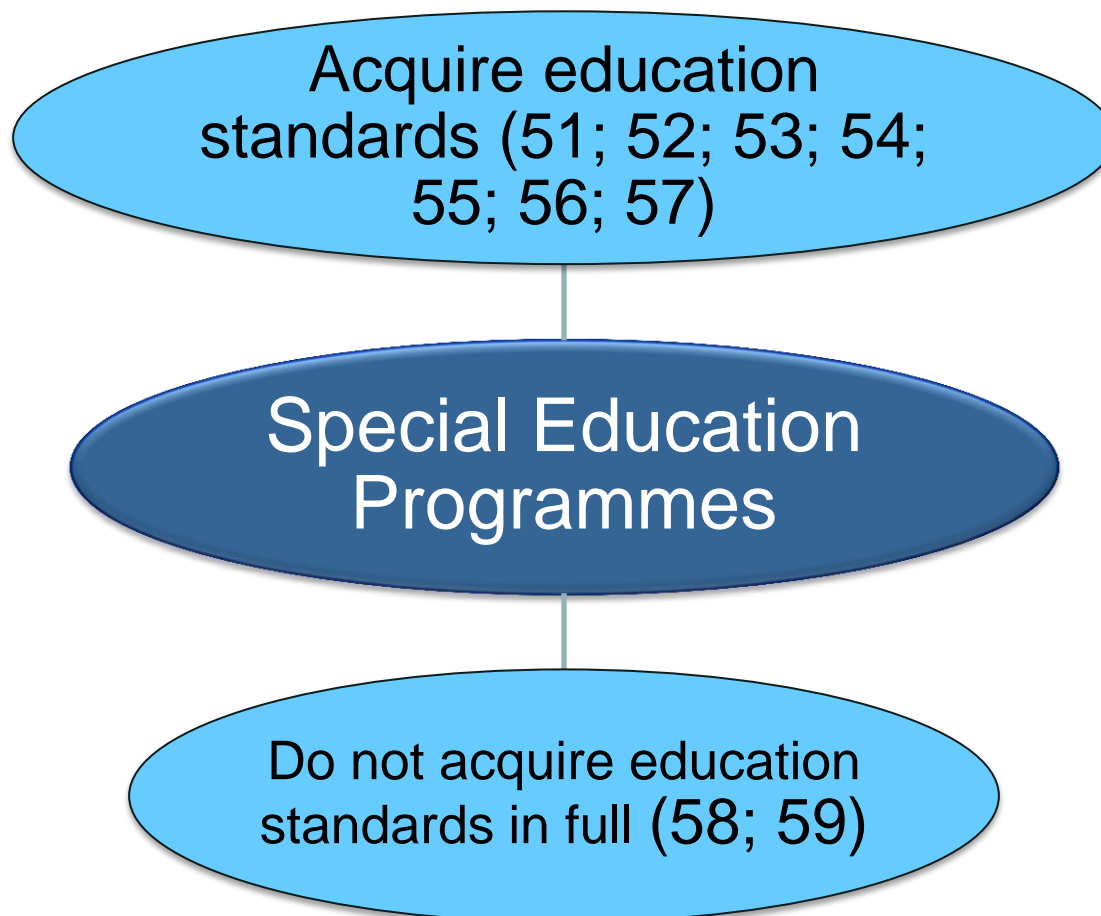




Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Special Education Programmes







Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Areas of activity of special education (1)

- both types of special education provision have always been equal in Latvia
  - special education institutions
  - special support to children in general mainstream education institutions



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Areas of activity of special education (2)

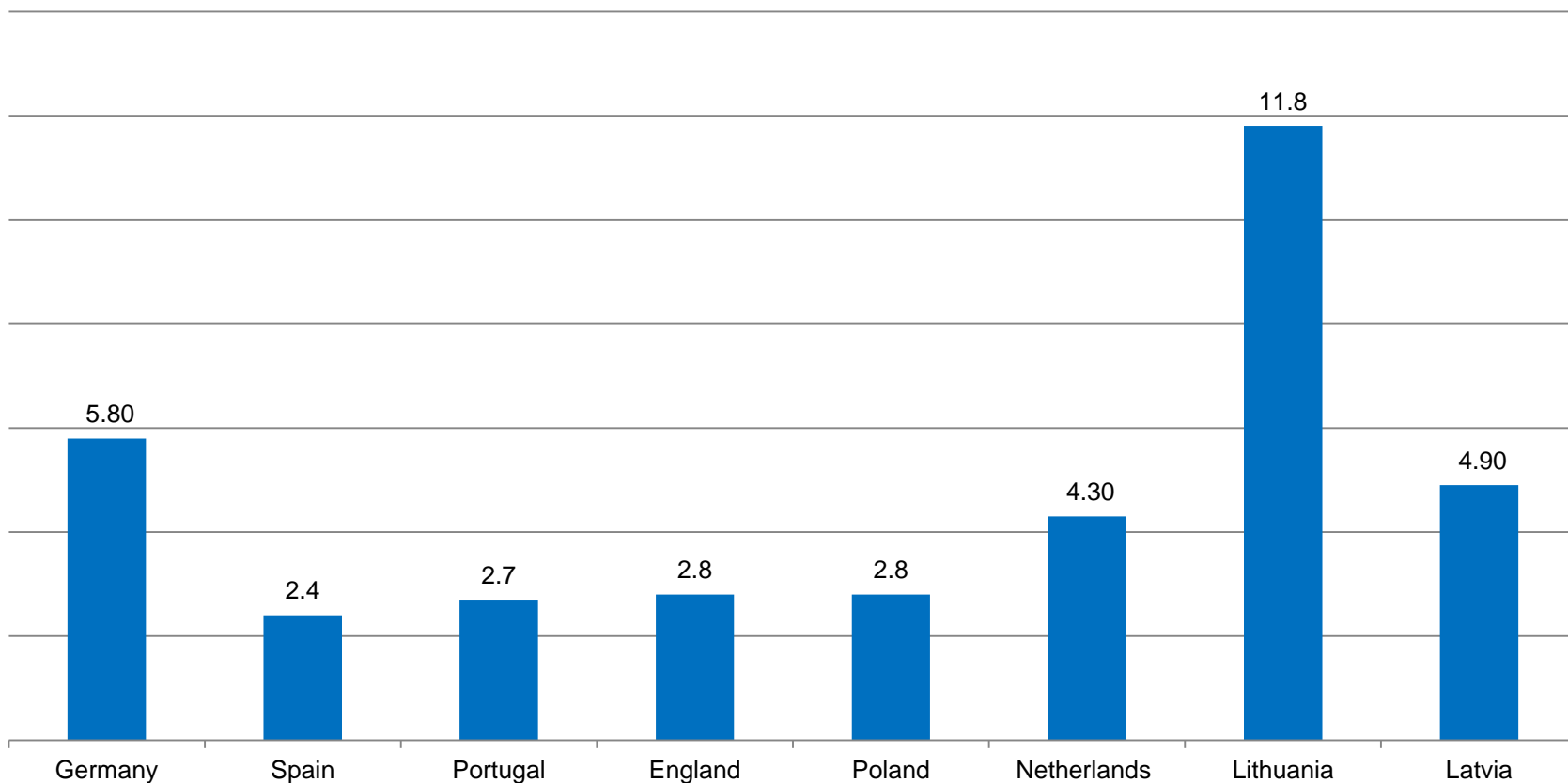
- the possibility to receive education in the most appropriate education institution is provided for each child with special needs by ensuring
  - the help of qualified specialists
  - acquisition of knowledge
  - development of social skills and practical skills
  - practical orientation in education
  - preparation for employment and integration into society
  - special correction and rehabilitation



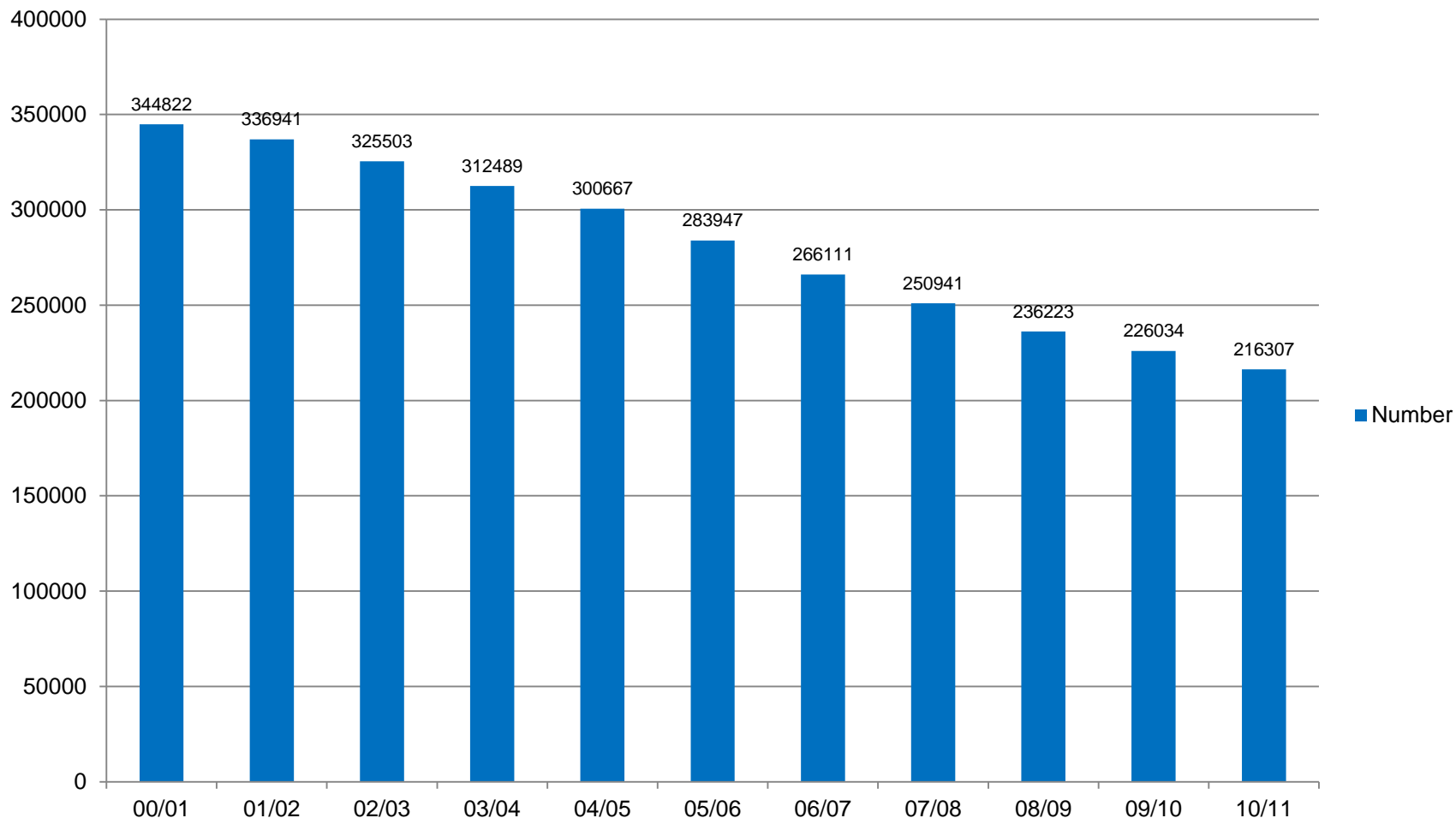
Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

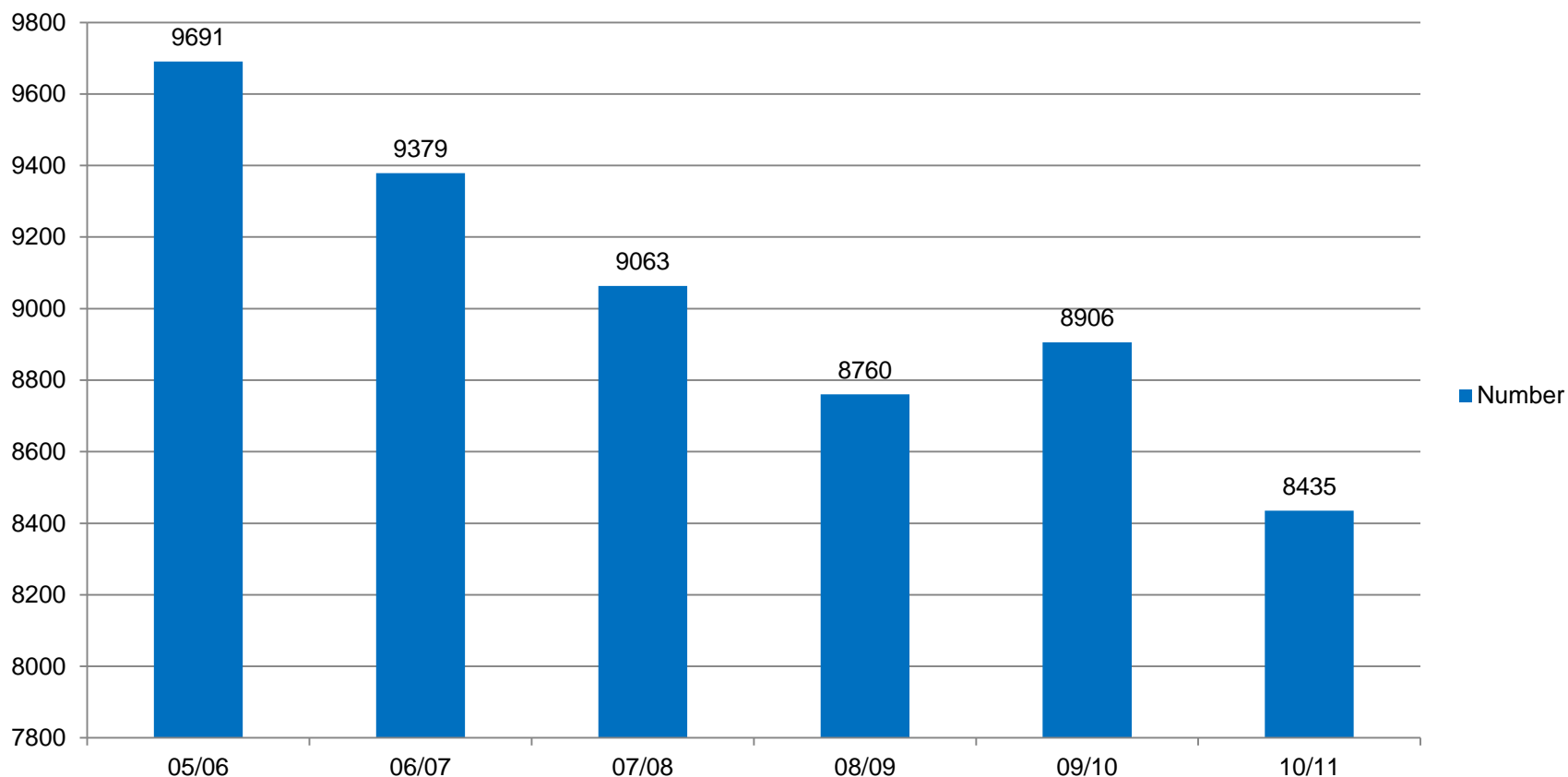
# Data of pupils with SEN in compulsory education



# Total number of learners in day schools (-128 515)



# Number of learners in special schools and special classes (-1256)



From the school year 2005/2006 the number of pupils has decreased

- in mainstream schools by **24%**
- in special schools and classes by **13%**



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Network of special education institutions (1)

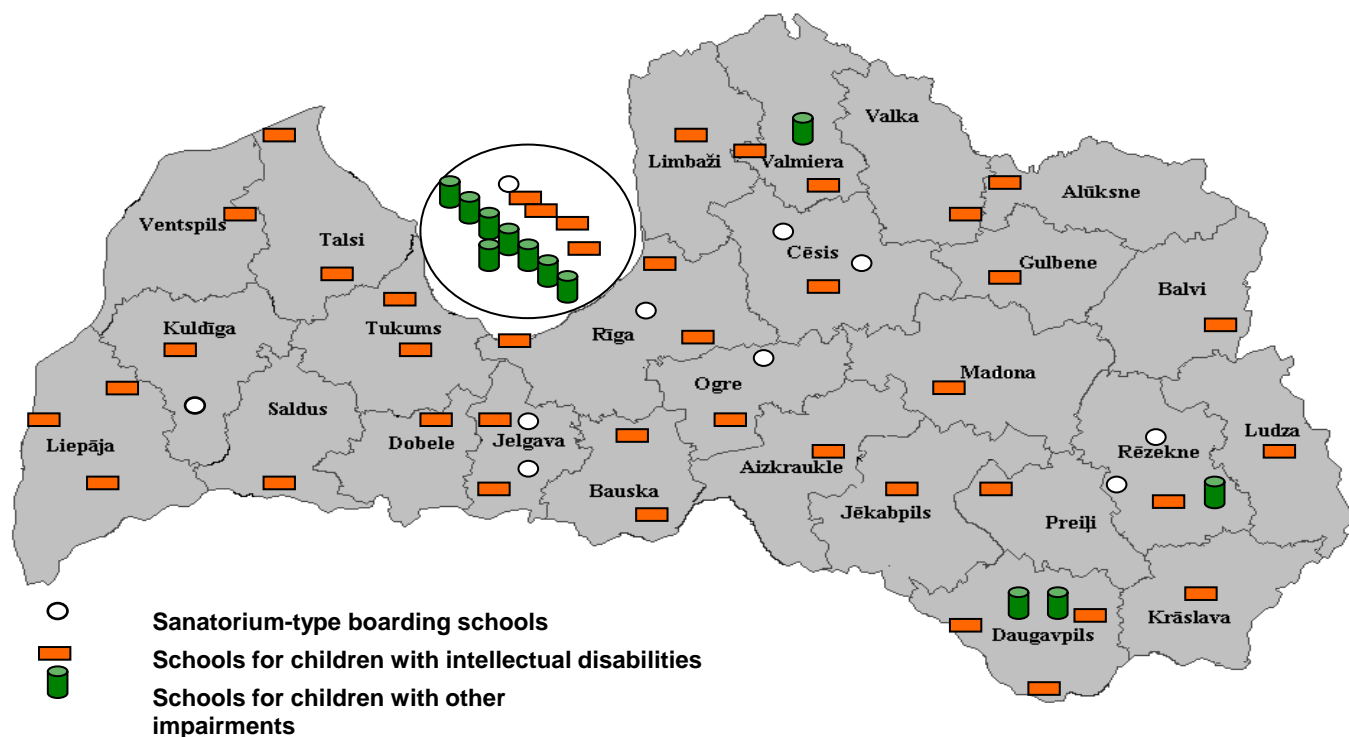
- programmes of special education may be provided by state, municipal and private special education institutions or general education institutions
- in the school year of 2010/11 there were 62 special education institutions founded by the state and municipalities, out of them
  - in Riga – 12
  - in the regions and towns of Latvia – 50



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Network of special education institutions in 2011







Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Network of special education institutions (2)

- it is encouraged
  - to open special education classes in general education institutions that are close to the place of residence of children
  - to integrate/include learners with special needs in mainstream education institutions (in they have the required equipment and provision)
  - technical adaptation of education institutions to the needs of children with serious physical disabilities

To promote integration/inclusion of learners with special needs:

- Support measures and accommodations are allowed in state tests and examinations (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers)
- Financing that follows learners with special needs is higher (1,6)



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# State guarantees for special education (1)

The state guarantees and ensures

- the acquisition of general education appropriate to the health condition and type of disability of the student with special needs
- the possibility that children with special needs can be involved in the programmes of special education following a statement from Pedagogical Medical Commission



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# State guarantees for special education (2)

The state guarantees and ensures

- the financing from national budget for the education of all children with special needs, benchmarking funding for the institutions of special education
- the financing of teacher salaries and maintenance costs of special education institutions from national budget
- gradual integration/inclusion of students with special needs into mainstream education institutions



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Development tendencies of special education (1)

In order to facilitate that all students with special needs can access education at the place of their residence or close to it, the main future tasks are the following:

- establishment of national and regional support system for special education
- extended functions of municipal Pedagogical Medical Commissions, providing methodological and practical support to teachers and parents of children with special needs, as well as other stakeholders



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Development tendencies of special education (2)

- facilitating the establishment of special education classes in general mainstream education institutions
- activities promoting the establishment of psychologically, socially (transport network) and technically suitable environment



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# Issues to be solved for including the children with special needs in mainstream education institutions (1)

- psychological readiness of the teaching staff, students and their parents in mainstream education institutions to welcome children with special needs
- technical suitability of mainstream education institutions for children with special needs
- professional readiness of teachers to work with children with special needs



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

## **Issues to be solved for including the children with special needs in general mainstream education institutions (2)**

- financial provision for the implementation of support measures required for children with special needs
- provision of transport services for children with special needs
- acquiring a vocation or profession within the system of vocational education and training