

Inspectorates of Education in Europe; some comparative remarks about their tasks and work.

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1. Background of this paper; introduction; structure.

1.1. Background: an update of the “Blue book” of 1999.

In 1999 the so – called “Blue book” was published. It had been prepared for SICI by the Flemish DVO. Bart Maes, Els Vereecke en Martine Zaman did the work in preparing the overview of what was done by the 14 Inspectorates of Education, which were at the time members of the “Standing International Conference of Inspectorates of Education in Europe”; SICI. The book was entitled: “Inspectorates of Education. A Descriptive Study.” The inspectorates were described in a common format which helped greatly in finding information about certain issues – for example: do inspectorates publish reports about schools? How is their relationship with the Minister of Education? Do they have a task in management of schools? etc. etc. The inspectorates described were: Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Flanders, France, the French – speaking Community of Belgium, Hesse, Ireland, the Netherlands, Northern – Ireland, Northrhine-Westphalia, Portugal, and Scotland.

It was felt that an updated version of this study was needed; preferably in a web – based version. Due to all kinds of factors it took somewhat longer before SICI was able to organise this update, but in 2007 questionnaires were sent to all the inspectorates that were members of SICI. New problems showed up with the return of the questionnaires; and with maintaining the contact with the inspectorates. So, the contract with the people who should do the job was questioned.

1.2. Restart.

In the summer of 2008 the Executive Committee of SICI asked me to finish the work: to edit the information delivered in the received questionnaires and for that purpose to create a readable format of “Profiles” of the inspectorates – more or less comparable with the format used in 1999 but not 100 % the same. And to write a not too long and not too complex and complete analysis of the profiles in order to create a relatively short

overview of the situation in the inspectorates which are members of SICI now¹. With good cooperation between Paul Schatteman, executive Secretary – General of SICI and me, it appeared to be possible to gather the questionnaires that had been sent in. In the period from August 2008 till January 2010 I worked on the re – editing of the information delivered by the contact – persons in the questionnaires into the new format for the profiles. That format was agreed between me and the Executives of SICI in August 2008. In some cases this re-editing was a lot of work; in other cases it was mainly a matter of re-ordering bits of information. Sometimes the information had to be updated by the contact – persons, because the information was already too “old”. In all cases Paul and I were keen to establish an effective process of exchange of drafts between the contact persons and myself.

Some seven inspectorates had not yet delivered a filled-in questionnaire before August 2008 or could not do that in the Autumn of 2008. They were asked to deliver the information directly in the new format. Some of them did, but some others did not. The editing of these profiles of course was less work.

1.3. *Profiles of 18 inspectorates, further development.*

Alas; now – April 2010 - not all profiles have been sent in; 18 are ready and have been posted on the site www.sici-inspectorates.org . Also some short summaries of future profiles of new members (Switzerland, Malta, Hamburg, Bulgaria) are there since early March 2010. But I did not want to wait any longer before finishing my work on the comparative analysis. Of course it is a pity that some older and large inspectorates (France, Northrhine – Westphalia, Austria,...) do not yet figure in the set of profiles and in this analysis. Also some very new members of SICI (Romania, Lithuania,...) were not able to complete the work in time. One of the advantages of the web-based version of the profiles is that it will be easy for people to bring changes into profiles that have been posted already and also to add new profiles. An example is Austria, where the government decided late in 2009 to bring important changes to the structure and task of the existing inspectorates in the “Länder” of Austria. They do not want to see an “outdated profile” on a European site now but prefer to wait a while.

Procedures for posting new profiles or for re-editing of profiles after this first round and agreements for these procedures and activities still have to be agreed by the Executive Committee of SICI and the Secretariat.

¹ At this date – April 2010 – there are 28 inspectorates member of SICI; some of them only very recently. See the site www.sici-inspectorates.org for updated information. 24 members were approached - 2007 or later - with the request to deliver a profile.

This analysis of course can easily be corrected, elaborated, repeated and/or expanded and overruled by somebody else in the near future. That would be fine. In order to stimulate and organize that process, the SICI – Secretariat has offered two possibilities.

The first one is that on the website of SICI a forum will be opened for reactions, discussions, reviews, critique, addendums, or whatever on or about this comparative analysis. Everybody who wants to post a reaction or whatever can send her or his text to the Secretariat – or later to another address to be given on the site www.sici-inspectorates.org

The second one is that all readers are asked to contact me (johan.van.bruggen@planet.nl), if specific corrections have to be brought into the pieces of text in this analysis where certain inspectorates are mentioned as examples or “cases” or where they abusively have not been mentioned. So, this is about factual things of a particular character – not about more general issues like in the first opportunity provided by the forum. I hope to be able to elaborate that type of corrections and improvements to this analysis in a kind of “after-sales editing” and to post a second version of this comparative analysis - within an agreed period, say one year or so. This will only be done in the web-version. What will be done later is open.

I want to thank all the colleagues who cooperated very willingly in the re-editing process for the 18 profiles and the exchange of drafts, although they were often already very busy with their other daily work as inspectors.

The first profiles that were finished in this process were able to be posted on the website www.sici-inspectorates.org by Vivien Watt of the Scottish Inspectorate HMIE in October/ December 2008. I want to thank Vivien for her always very quick and correct actions.

Gradually – in December 2008 – I started to develop ideas for this comparative analysis. In February – March 2009 I wrote a first draft. A few former colleagues from the SICI – network were so kind to give me some feedback on that first draft: Bill Maxwell, Roger Standaert, Tim Key, Annette Roeters, Paul Schatteman. I want to thank them all for sometimes detailed and always helpful comments and advices; I gratefully used them.

In August 2009 I started to write a second version – using also some more profiles, which had been finished in spring and summer 2009. At the General Assembly of SICI, October 6 and 7, 2009 in Dublin, I was able to present the core of that work. In winter 2009/2010 I wrote this third version, that is now posted on the site.

(I wrote the comparative analysis in English – not my mother tongue. But of course that means that the language used often is rather simple. Michael Donaldson has read the whole text and has improved real mistakes or errors, but we thought it not to be necessary

to do a real editing of the English – for reasons of money and time.²⁾

1.4. *The structure of the paper.*

The structure is a little bit unusual.

The core is the analysis itself of the 18 profiles, broken down in a number of tables with 51 characteristics of these inspectorates; these tables with the “technical” introduction are to be found in paragraph 10.

They are preceded by some remarks about the limitations of this paper (paragraph 2) and a short description (paragraph 3) of the present work of modern inspectorates in a summarizing text of only seven pages – a type of advanced organizer for the paper. This description is used in paragraph 5 (some seven pages too) for the formulation of a small number of questions and issues about the core work of inspectors: to produce a valid, reliable picture of a school and to provide an evaluation of its quality.

Then in paragraph 6 (some 30 pages) the core of the comparative analysis is given in ten sections. These ten sections are about the “full or whole or complete inspection of schools” as this task is executed by the 18 inspectorates; for example about the frameworks they use, about the frequency – once in x years - , about the kind of feedback they give to schools, and other issues. Of course these issues correspond to the issues that were covered in the profiles and also with the 51 characteristics in which I broke down these issues for the tables. In paragraph 7, I write about some “newer modes of inspecting schools” (proportional, risk-based,..) that seem to be able to replace or complete the full inspection as a mode that is used by most inspectorates now. Paragraph 8 is about other tasks of the 18 inspectorates, accompanied by the most important comparative statements. Finally, paragraph 9 is about inspectorates as organisations and that paragraph gives some comparative information about the relation with ministries, staff, etc.

Then in paragraph 10 five tables are given with the 51 characteristics for the 18 inspectorates. The characteristics are grouped into five groups. These tables are given without comment – they contain the “raw data” that I used for the comparative pieces in the paragraphs 6, 7, 8 and 9. However, some of this raw data has not been used explicitly in my text, so a closer inspection of the tables remains worthwhile.

² However: after Michael’s checks and corrections I had to bring some changes and extra pieces into the text. Of course, all mistakes and “bad English” have to be written on my account.

Paragraph 11 contains a short list of some of the major problems and challenges for inspectorates that I see for the near future. These thoughts are of course subjectively based on my study of the profiles and other documents and on my personal knowledge acquired in many contacts in the last ten years or so. I offer these as elements for the continuous strategic discussions that all inspectorates have – as was also clear in the General Assembly of SICI in Dublin, October 2009.

After this paragraph there are three annexes; one with some information about the rapid development of modern inspectorates in the German-speaking countries in Europe; one with the format that has been used for the writing and editing of the profiles; and one with some literature about “inspection and inspectorates”- not complete, not as literature used in the paper, but only for a general orientation for staff in inspectorates who want to do some more study.

Still one remark: I have hesitated whether I should add a list with ideas about further work of SICI in exploring opportunities for professionalization and cooperation. In workshops or in the already starting SICI Academy or in collaborative projects... At some places in the text I have mentioned some of these ideas to make profit of the wealth of facts that are gathered in the profiles and in this paper; and to go further. But I found it a little bit patronizing to go further with that and leave it to the participants in SICI and other professionals to find creative possibilities to learn deeper and broader from each other.

I do hope that in a few years somebody sees an opportunity to build on this comparative work and to produce a more profound analysis with more coverage of inspectorates and of characteristics and trends.

Johan C. van Bruggen, April 2010.

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2. Restrictions of this paper; its aim.

Five remarks about the restrictions of the paper.

a. No general study with analysis of literature...

First: there is already a considerable amount of literature about the phenomenon of “inspection of schools” and about its place in educational policy and in the theory of “development of schools”. For example authors such as Marzano, Janssens, MacBeath, Böttcher, Elmore, Sammons, Fullan, Rolff, Osler, Lawton, Van Bruggen, Matthews, Brockmann, De Rijcke, Scheerens, Oelkers, and many others.³ I do not give an overview of this literature and certainly it is not the intention to go into a discussion with authors. So, this is not a general paper about the development of “inspection of schools” and about all kinds of issues and questions related to that phenomenon; although of course in the introductory paragraph 3 I have to sketch some “lines of background”. In an annex I give a list of some other recent sources for further reading. Some sources there with studies about the impact of inspection of schools have been delivered by colleagues of OFSTED; thanks to Tim Key who has helped. But all readers of course can consult their own national or international searching – machines or bibliographies for extra sources.

b. Background: Read the profiles...

Second: I write this paper with the assumption that readers have read the profiles – or at least a number of them. Consequently, I do not describe “simple things” such as the principle of “full – or whole or complete - inspection of schools”. I do not describe elements of the education systems in the various countries where Inspectorates are working in their educational and governance contexts – although of course the working of an inspectorate cannot be understood and analysed without that context and its recent history.

Concerning that important and complex embedding only one remark here and now: I have learned that for many readers from Anglo-Saxon countries and from Belgium and the Netherlands it is difficult to grasp the absolutely different relationship between the three actors “State, school – system, and one particular school”... in the countries with more or less “German –Austrian” histories. So, understanding of the development of inspectorates and of their difficulties and opportunities in countries like the 16 Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany, or Austria, or Switzerland, but also of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Rumania, Poland is rather complex for more “western” people. Talking in Central European–styled countries about “relative autonomy for schools” or about “the function of heads of schools” (in the debate about deregulation) is something

³ I do not give bibliographic details in the text, but only in the Annex.

that sounds more or less comparable with these concepts in for example Flanders or Scotland, but has a very different context and background and often a different meaning and significance for people. The idea – based on the Prussian Enlightenment in the period 1750 – 1830 – that it is the responsibility and mission of the State to take care for schools and for everything that is necessary to run schools operationally is deeply rooted in the minds of civil servants and politicians and teachers and parents. That background has led to mighty bureaucracies, detailed administrative rules, and a heavy controlling and checking function called “inspection”. In the German word “Schulaufsicht” these governing, controlling/checking and administrative functions were coupled. So, the “new” meaning of “inspection of schools” as a more evaluating function, focused on quality, and respecting the responsibility and autonomy of teachers and heads, was and sometimes is rather strange for people. Although in the Netherlands, England and other “western” countries, the development of more autonomy for schools and more “open choice” certainly was and is not easy too, in the “German – style” countries this development is much more complex.

For countries with the more Latin - Roman background - coloured by a history with hard struggles between the Roman - Catholic Church and the States about power in education (France, Spain, Portugal, Italy), these relations between the state, the school system and one particular school are also differing - more comparable with the German-Austrian tradition than with the Anglo-Saxon tradition, but not the same. See for example the interesting study of Schmale and Dodde (1991) about Eastern – European developments since the 18th century.

The picture becomes still more complex because in many of these countries the political power in education is more in the hands of “regional” politicians than at central or federal level (decentralisation). So, in fact there is not one inspectorate in Germany, but there are 16 of them - without a federal one. In France the 30 Académies have their own inspectorate, but there is also a national inspectorate; the “Inspection Générale” with tasks which are partly comparable with the tasks of inspectors in the regions but also with other tasks. In Spain, the situation is comparable with France, but the tasks of the “Alta Inspeccion” are not the same as the tasks of the `Inspection Générale` in France....

In a short paper like this one, it is impossible to spell out these important political and administrative context factors. Or to bring them into a well – analyzed theoretical framework. Even more difficult is the analysis of the cultural elements in this context of other ideas about the responsibility of the State. This complex of differences is the background to many projects aiming at stimulating a more “civil society” of, for example, the Bertelsmann – Foundation in Germany; and many other comparable foundations and initiatives.

c. No “critical analysis”...

Three: this paper must not be compared with the booklet of Roger Standaert from 2001: “Inspectorates of Education in Europe. A critical analysis”. (Leuven, Acco). That booklet was – partially – based on the “Descriptive study” of 1999. Standaert gave a background analysis of the 14 descriptions, focussing on two dichotomies in the thinking behind the concept “quality of education” and “evaluation of that quality”. The first dichotomy is that between “local or school-bound autonomy and power to decide and to steer the development of a school” and “central power to do so”. The second dichotomy is that between a more process – oriented concept of quality of education (“how good is teaching and learning? how good is coordination and management in a school?”) with a more “product – oriented” approach (“how good are learning results of pupils compared with those of other schools?”). Ideas about inspection of schools and the function of that work and its results – in a report about the quality of a school – can easily be connected with these two dichotomies. We will see these connections later in this paper. In the second part of the book Roger Standaert gives comparative analyses of a number of aspects of inspection of schools. For example: How do inspectorates work with systems of full inspection of schools? How do inspectorates deal with schools that are judged as to have insufficient quality? How do inspectorates deal with objections against their school reports? Etc.

In this paper I will do that too: describe in a summative and comparative way how the inspectorates deal with these types of issues. But I have to remain rather short and superficial. In many of the “technical” aspects of “full or whole inspection of schools” the summative analysis of Roger Standaert is still valid; I hope that in most libraries of inspectorates his booklet is still available and can be consulted in connexion with this short paper.

d. Inspection as a node for several issues of educational policy.

Four: I am convinced that the issue “inspection of schools” is and will remain an issue where various important political and educational trends and developments come together in a node of educational, social, cultural and political aspects. Many of these are not easily to unravel. For example (and I only mention a number of important issues in a few words):

- 1 The general phenomenon that “accountability” is asked of many more or less public provisions in health care, social work, public administration and also in education. What do these institutions do with the public money? How effective and efficient are they? How good are they? Self – evaluations are sought, but “the public” and so also politicians ask for more: independent investigations and judgement, open discussion, ranking ...

- 2 The general trend – not only in education but also in health care etc. - is that schools get more autonomy in relation to decisions about organisation-curriculum-staff-etc. And the consequence is that there are more “best solutions”. So, it is necessary for inspectorates to look carefully for the schools’ own solutions, to value these in a context-bound evaluation; but also with reference to everything the inspectorate knows about “what works” and is effective and efficient and about what is good for learners. In doing so, inspectorates have to give a “client – focused evaluation” that nevertheless is of general significance. Of course this challenge is a source of conflict and tensions; and one can understand the tendency of some inspectors or inspectorates to “keep to the safe side” by judging the quality of a school in only rather general terms; but at the cost of only giving a not very helpful report to the school.
- 3 The growing attention given to more effective instructional arrangements. And the need to do more in order to professionalise teachers - and inspectors! - in these arrangements and their backgrounds in psychology, neuro – sciences, etc.
- 4 The intensifying debate about what “good quality is” in classes and schools. With, for example, the complex problems in identifying and realizing “good citizenship education” or “evidence – based teaching” or “good self – governing learning” etc.
- 5 The need for growing differentiation and individualisation in educational arrangements for the growing differences in target populations in schools.
- 6 The trend to recognize that schools cannot work in isolation from families - street work – police - youth and social work, and the consequential enlargement and embedding of school work in wider arrangements of inclusion, “broad schools”, social innovation in neighbourhoods, etc. And the consequences of these developments for enlarging the scope of inspection work to encompass inspection of these social and pedagogical arrangements. Do inspectors only inspect schools or also broader youth work, provision for adult education, for early school leavers or for young single mothers, etc? In England, that has led to the decision to widen the scope of OFSTED.
- 7 The general trend for accountability does not only mean that schools have to give account – in public reports and otherwise – of what they are doing and how successful they are. That work is indeed a focus for inspection. But the growing accent on decentralisation and autonomy also has as a consequence in that there is a clear trend to do not only the “direct” inspection of the quality of educational work of the schools, but also the “indirect” (often called “meta “) inspection of the “governance” of schools and the various prescriptions set for that. For

example: “doing self – evaluation” – is that done correctly and adequately? “Having an advisory board with parents and local people” – does that board really function and does it take its responsibility? “Having arranged external components in the processes of self evaluation” – has that been done and does it function? “Working effectively with a development plan for the further development of the school or provision” – is that plan really workable and has it been developed and carried out with involvement of all stakeholders, etc? So, accountability has also the meaning of “keeping good governance” and inspection of that good governance and holding schools and governors accountable for that good governance is a second line. And accountability has also a third consequence when it is combined with the trends of decentralisation power and facilities and money to local or regional structures (Local Educational Authorities, City – pact, Regional Networks,...) that get responsibility for matching schooling and education with the specific problems and opportunities for children. Will this decentralisation mean that inspectorates are going to inspect how good the work is of local authorities? How well regional networks function - for example networks financed by the state for helping unemployed young people with a combination of schooling and training and subsidies for employers? In the UK this has been done already for a couple of years. In Sweden we see also this line, but other countries have not yet expanded inspectorates’ work into this direction.

- 8 The growing trend to leave decisions about the choice of a school to parents and the accompanying trend that schools try “to be different”. In most countries governments have opened – recently or long ago - possibilities for founding and funding non – publicly governed schools, often religiously oriented, sometimes also based on pedagogical philosophies (Montessori, Dalton,...). Are inspection regimes for all these schools the same? How do inspectors combine respect for the own identity of such a school with the general task of guaranteeing basic quality in all schools, irrespective of their denominational or pedagogical philosophy or belief? When do certain convictions about how to educate young people and what to tell them conflict with general ideas about “what is good”?

Many of these general or more specific educational trends and phenomena are interrelated and sometimes also in tension with each other. And there is enough sociological and political literature about them. In this paper I will not explore these trends, their societal and political backgrounds and the consequences for inspection work. But I am convinced that due to these developments “inspection of schools” will become more and more a “hot” issue for educational research. Comparative analysis of “inspection modes” and details of that work can deliver very interesting knowledge. A detailed analysis of these opportunities for research is not the aim of this paper. But I do hope that researchers – initiated in some project by SICI or independently – will take the

challenge to do such a comparative analysis in a much more profound way – using the profiles; contacting the contact – persons and using the techniques of “participative observation”.

In particular – as a first topic to be mentioned - the connection of the characteristics of the inspection system as such with the characteristics of the governance system is very relevant and interesting!

A second topic that I leave aside is the analysis of the frameworks of inspection: what are the main aspects of quality of schools that are inspected and how is that done – what are the indicators that inspectorates use? This touches very intensively the daily work of inspectors and leads into the heart of the discussions about what good quality in European schools really is. The SICI – project “International Comparative Analysis of Learning and Teaching” is a trial to do explorative work here. See paragraph 6.2. for some deeper although still superficial exploration of the issue.

The connection between “inspecting as such” with the accent on “only” giving a picture of a school with an evaluation and a diagnosis of problems at one side and giving advice about how to improve or even support at the other side is a vital issue that is touched in paragraph 6.9.

The aim of the paper.

So, the aim of this paper is a modest one: to give access to some interesting issues of “inspection of schools” as an important phenomenon in educational policy of our time and to draw attention to some common elements in these inspectorates and to some differences – and to mention some problems that appear to me to be rather important for the further development of “inspection of schools” as an activity that can help to improve education in schools.

e. Restricted to SICI – inspectorates; and to inspection of schools.

A last restriction that I have to mention is that there are more inspectorates in Europe than the 28 that are members of SICI. For example: all 16 German “Länder” - the entities of the Federal Republic of Germany - now have inspectorates that work more or less in the same way as the inspectorates that are members of SICI, although only five of them (Northrhine-Westphalia, Saxony, Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate and very recently also Hamburg) are members of SICI. In Switzerland many “Kantons” (the entities of the Swiss state that – like the German Länder – have autonomy in school matters), in particular the larger ones, also have such an inspectorate, sometimes counting only four or five inspectors. Fortunately in Summer 2009 the ARGEV (Arbeits Gemeinschaft Evaluation von Schulen), the Association of German – speaking kanton – based inspectorates became a member of SICI.

(At the end of the paper – in an Annex – I give some more details about the three German – speaking countries Germany, Switzerland, and Austria).

Poland has in most of its regional entities also the same type of inspectorates. Croatia and Serbia are starting; Albania has an inspectorate too. Turkey also has developments in its inspectorate in the same direction. Also in Italy slow movements in this direction are to be seen; in some regions (in the German – speaking Trento – Adige an inspectorate of “SICI – style” is working).

That is – as far as I know now – not the case in Greece and in Finland.

But also in a growing number of states of the USA inspectorates of the “European type:” are working or beginning to work; mostly as part of the work of the superintendent’s office (the regional or local authority) and often rather strictly based on the judgement of the outcomes of schools and in close connection with improvement schemes. So, the connection of “inspection” with school development and support for schools in their development is strong. In New Zealand and many Australian states inspectorates of this type work already longer. These developments are sometimes strongly influenced by the work of the inspectorates of England (OFSTED) or Scotland (HMIE). Also in Africa, some southern countries developed such an inspectorate. Not too speak about Singapore, several provinces of China, some countries in South – America (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia).

Although I do not have a detailed knowledge of all these inspectorates I am rather sure – based on what I do know from my contacts in the last 15 years and some actualizing web – based investigations of the last few months – that the general trends and characteristics, that I describe in this paper also count for the other European inspectorates, not yet members of SICI; and also for the non – European inspectorates.

Apart from this geographical restriction to SICI - inspectorates I restrict the paper also to “inspection of schools”: although some inspectorates also inspect youth and children-facilities in a much broader sense (OFSTED, Estyn in Wales,...) and/ or prison – education and/ or hospital- schools and/or adult education and/or education in workplaces. Of course an inventory of that type of broadening of the tasks of some inspectorates should be interesting too, but it leads us too far now.

3. Work of modern inspectorates of education and its background; a summarizing description.

In this paragraph I want to give a short summarizing description of the tasks of inspectorates of education as these are executed now. Not all inspectorates do all types of work that I mention or carry out all tasks frequently, but most of these tasks may be found in many inspectorates. Details may be found in the profiles. More specific facts

about the number of inspectorates carrying out certain tasks will be given later in this paper. Also particular characteristics or details will be given later.

Full or whole inspection of schools.

Even a quick glance at the profiles shows that almost all inspectorates have some system of “full inspection of schools”; also called “whole inspection” or “complete inspection” or “broad inspection”. The core of that “mode of inspection” is:

- 3 Inspectors visit a school in order to gain an overview of what happens there and what are the results of the learning and teaching;
- 4 They mostly do that in a small group; the size of the group depends on the size and complexity of the school to be inspected;
- 5 In most cases the visit lasts a few days (2 – 5, depending too of size and complexity);
- 6 The activities of inspectors vary but almost always the following is done: they analyze all kind of papers – syllabus, school development plan, timetables, self evaluation, etc. - before the visit; they talk with the head of the school and with other leading people; they talk with students and parents – sometimes also with representatives of employers or other “stakeholders” in the world of schooling; they observe lessons and other learning and teaching activities; they observe meetings of staff; they study files of pupils and about pupils.
- 7 They use a common, “inspectorate – own” framework of criteria about what is seen as good quality of education in schools; they use this set of indicators and criteria in order to evaluate what they have seen against this common set of criteria and so they come to an evaluation of the quality of the school – in most cases in terms of the quality of domains (or areas) of quality (e.g. “the organisation and management in the school”, “the teaching and learning”) and not in a too simple “one-liner” with a judgement about the school as a whole, because most inspectorates believe that the school’s reality is too complex to catch it in one evaluative statement.
- 8 They share their evaluation with the school; almost always in a meeting with representatives after the inspection, but also in a report that is delivered to the school after a short period.
- 9 Most inspectorates publish these reports – but in various ways; not all inspectorates do that.
- 10 If an inspection shows that a school has serious quality problems, inspectorates

have various policies of communicating that with the responsible authorities (governors of a school, regional authority, or ministry). The arrangements for help or other measures that come into force then, vary widely, depending of the governance structures in the countries.

- 11 Such a full inspection is done in every school; and most inspectorates have a scheme that foresees a repeated inspection after three or four or six years.
- 12 The methods of the full inspection can vary for various school types or school sectors.

In the profiles the inspectorates report about these and other characteristics of “full inspection of schools”. In paragraph 5 I will formulate some questions and issues about some of these characteristics. And in the comparative analyses in paragraph 6 I will come back to these questions and issues.

But first, there is something more to say about the work of inspectorates of education in general.

Condition and basis: Access to all schools and all information.

Formulating a general judgement about the quality of a school can also be done by other actors than an inspectorate of education. Within their framework for self – evaluation and school – development schools can ask a committee of external people – for example principals from other schools – to do the same type of “full inspection”. In several countries such movements or associations or initiatives exist (in Germany for example the association “Blick über den Zaun” ; www.blickueberdenzaun.de). And often governments stimulate that type of work, because it is generally strongly believed that self – evaluation (with an external component as sketched) is good. The difference is that such an inspection, resulting in a judgement by “a critical friend” is not obliged; is not done in all schools; and mostly is not done against a nationally agreed framework of criteria and indicators and norms; and does not have the official status of an external inspection, done by an “official”, government-linked organisation like an inspectorate of education.

The heart of the matter is that - by law or decree - all these “government-linked inspectorates” have a formal “right of access” and “right of information” to all relevant aspects of the reality of a school. So, inspectors have the right to talk with pupils; have the right to draw a random sample of parents with whom they want to communicate; have the right to decide in which classrooms they want to observe teaching and learning, etc. This “right of access and information” is a guarantee that schools cannot too easily do some “window – dressing” by hiding some aspects or by opening – for inspection - only favourable situations. Schools cannot refuse

inspection. Almost always inspectorates give notice in advance – weeks or even months; but unannounced inspections exist also in some countries. This “right of access and information” is a strong basis under the characteristics of the work of inspectorates of education: independence, professionalism, reliability, authority - with possible consequences for a school.

Condition and basis: National, standardized framework about what is “good quality” of schools.

This is a second important aspect of “state-linked inspectorates”; that the framework with statements about quality that has to be found in schools – in terms of criteria and standards and indicators – is not something that is more or less privately owned by a team of inspectors or another group, but has been developed carefully and is discussed carefully within the inspectorate, with scientists and with representatives of all kinds of societal groups; and with all kinds of organisations and groups from schools. And only after such a procedure it has been approved by the minister of education or even by parliament. The consequence is that inspectors, in their application of such a framework by formulating judgements about a particular school, may see themselves as “representatives of the society at large” or “the state in general”. This gives weight to the judgement; it has to be taken seriously. In some countries, this “take it seriously” is formalized by a rule for schools to respond to the judgement within – for example – three months with “an adequate reaction” or improvement plan.

Of course, this only works if the framework is accepted broadly as “the” framework for a serious discussion about “the quality of a school”. And – not less important - it only works so, if the inspectorate itself takes the framework seriously and invests sufficiently in the internal exchange of views and interpretations; and invests also in inter – inspector – judging - reliability and training for that.

Possible consequences of a judgement.

If inspectors have to give a judgement about the quality of a school, this judgement may also be that the quality is insufficient. Or that the quality is extremely good - much better than might be expected. In both cases we touch sensitive issues: what to do then? Punishment? Closure? Rewarding the school with extra money? (“the Matthew – principle”: the good ones are rewarded and may become even better; the bad ones are punished and become even worse). In the profiles we see various solutions here. We have to come back to the issue later.

The issue of availability of the judgement as a public judgement (in print or in the internet) is strongly related to this issue. This availability easily leads to “league tables” or other forms of ranking, constructed by newspapers or other groups, even if

inspectorates themselves do not want that because they say – and all do so! – that the reality of a school is too complex to pack it into one figure or score... Public reports and ranking are also connected with the issue of “open and free choice of a school by parents” – which in itself is a strong movement in many countries (see the OECD – publication: “Schools, a choice of direction” by Donald Hirsch; OECD, 2002).

Local or regional authorities as stakeholders and/or object of inspection.

One key contextual factor in inspection developments is the extent to which a country gives a strong role to local authorities in the management of education provision. This is exactly what is done in Germany (Schulaufsicht), but also in the countries of the United Kingdom, in Austria and in France and other countries in varying forms of local governments/authorities. Where you have a strong obligation for local authorities to monitor and improve quality in the schools in their area (as is the case in the UK) and eventually also to manage schools – partially like in most German Länder, then you can build inspection models that fit to these local responsibilities. See in paragraph 6.9 about the German type of Zielvereinbarung – a kind of agreed and undersigned action plan with mutual obligations – negotiated and decided by the local authority after an inspection - between the school, the local authority and the support agencies. Similar but not equal relations exist in the UK. See in 6.9. When schools are effectively autonomous and have no relationship with a local authority holding them accountable and supporting their improvement - like in the Netherlands and Flanders – the relationship between inspectorate and school is different. In the UK there has been a tendency to have two complementary levels of inspection, namely the inspection of individual schools and also the inspection of the effectiveness of local authorities in carrying out their role for monitoring and improving the quality of their schools. In the German Länder this is not so – until now.

This issue of local or regional authority of course is a very important context factor and at several places in the paper I come back to it.

Link with self – evaluation; proportionality, risk – based inspections.

If a “full inspection” of a school is done for the third or fourth time, it might be expected that in many domains of quality not too much has changed. Is it necessary to do a full inspection again? Or is it enough to do that only in some weaker domains? Or only in domains where risks are seen, based on the results of self – evaluations or on complaints or other signals? And: if a school delivers a very well executed (complete coverage of all important domains of quality, with external judgements, reliable) self – evaluation, is it then necessary to do an external inspection? In the profiles these issues are discussed and reported and I come back to them in paragraphs 6.5. and 7.

Backgrounds in accountability - trends, convictions about the key – function of education, emancipation of citizens.

This type of “full inspection of schools” is a worldwide phenomenon that apparently fits into a wider, worldwide movement towards accountability of schools and opening them for a more standardized, external evaluation of what they do. That movement is rooted in the experience and conviction of many citizens that “education, education, education” (to paraphrase the slogan of Tony Blair in the nineties) is an important key to individual wellbeing and to social and economic welfare and peace. As has been said: “Education is too important to leave it to teachers only...” The same accountability is asked from other public services like hospitals, libraries, local and national administrations, etc. In many countries, public evaluation of these public services has become commonplace in the last two decades. But it is not only accountability by self – evaluation reports and “open days” etc; but “official and formal” external judgements by some type of inspectorate about the services and provisions have become rather normal too. In several countries, these external, independent and professional judgements about hospitals etc., but also about restaurants, banks, “the quality of life in town X” etc. can be found – in papers or on the Internet. Effectiveness (“how good is the service; do they give what they say?”) and efficiency (“are they using the public money well?”) are keywords.

Another motive behind the rapid growth of “full inspection of schools” is that parents have learned to stand up for their “rights” on information and good education; they are themselves “emancipated”. One may say that schooling and education in the sixties and seventies – aiming at emancipation of pupils and educating them towards autonomy and independency – have been successful: these pupils are now the parents that seek accountability and the best education possible for their children.

All these motives have been described in the literature about evaluation and inspection. See the annex 3.

A second type of inspections and products: Thematic inspections.

Many inspectorates - not all – not only do full inspections of all schools, but also an inspection of a restricted topic or subject and not in all schools of the country, but in a sample. In such an inspection a more detailed and deeper analysis than can be achieved in the mode of full inspection is possible. The aim is to obtain a more detailed evaluation of that certain topic at a national level. Examples are: a report about the quality of mathematics education in the junior grades of primary education, a report about the effectiveness of measures in secondary schools and their neighbourhoods against truancy, a report about the efficiency of communication in secondary schools among teachers and between teachers and the management. Such

an inspection is done by a group of specialized inspectors – sometimes enlarged and strengthened with contracted experts from outside the inspectorate. The mode of work is more or less the same as for a full inspection, but focused on one topic. Reports are given to the schools in the sample, but the “real” product is the aggregating of all results in a thematic report, that depicts the state of the art in the theme. This can then be used by various actors: ministries, teacher training facilities, publishers of school books, etc.

General periodic reports about “the state of education” in the country.

Many – not all – inspectorates analyze all their school inspections plus their thematic inspections, sometimes also combined with other sources, and publish periodically (once a year or once in three years for example) a summarizing report about “the state of education”. For all relevant criteria for “good quality” a summarizing judgement is given. And the report also describes developments in various aspects of education in schools and sometimes broader issues as well.

Some inspectorates also publish reports of the same type for regions.

These “state of the art reports” in some cases lead to discussions in the press, to debates in parliament and to reactions by the authorities in taking general measures. But they can also help schools if these want to compare their own situation in a certain quality – aspect with the general picture. In particular, if the general reports contain tables with average values of proportions of schools that have been judged “good” or “sufficient” or “weak” (or so) in certain indicators of quality, these proportion – figures can help schools to benchmark themselves against such an average value.

Apart from the two types of inspections, mentioned above (a full inspection of one school for all important aspects of quality; a thematic inspection in a sample of schools) and the products of that work, there are some other tasks, although not carried out in all inspectorates.

Complaints

Traditionally some inspectorates had a lot to do with complaints of teachers about heads; or parents about teachers, etc. In most countries now schools have to have their own complaint procedures; with complaint - commissions at a school – base or regionally. But rather often parents or teachers or sometimes also pupils/students still address complaints to the inspectorate. In almost all inspectorates the line is taken that people are told where they have to address their complaint; some inspectorates also mediate, but most inspectorates are not the official complaint agency or ombudsman. Some inspectorates inspect/check if and how schools cope carefully with complaints.

And some also use an analysis of the list of complaints of a school from the last three years or so as one of the sources of signals about quality for their full inspection of the school.

Management and administration.

Traditionally, some inspectorates had important managerial tasks in running schools: curricular decisions, appointment of staff, facility management about buildings or furniture or school books, etc. Almost everywhere these tasks have been transferred to the heads of the school and/or to local or regional “boards of education” or similar agencies. And a “separation” between the agency that does the inspections as described above and other agencies that keep managerial tasks, came into force. In particular, in several German Länder this happened, but also in Sweden and in Swiss cantons. This happened as part of a movement towards deregulation and decentralisation. But some inspectorates – e.g. Spain - still execute some of these tasks – always linked to the specific history and laws of the country. The profiles illustrate this issue well. I come back to the issue in paragraph 8.4.

Examinations and tests.

Several inspectorates inspect whether the examinations at schools (secondary or higher) are organised well and taken by students in an honest way. This of course has to do with the important civil effects of examinations. This “check” is – in some countries – a usual “conformity check with rules and regulations” in the same way as inspectorates check if schools follow laws or decrees concerning the curriculum (subjects, attainment targets, content – prescriptions). In most cases inspectors are not themselves involved in the making of the examinations or in the grading; in some inspectorates, staff are involved in advisory work about the development of the national programs for the examinations and their link to the national curricula. The involvement in the whole examination issue used to be more important than it is now – examinations have more and more become the business of separate agencies. The same line is visible for testing students – at school level or at national level – in primary schools.

In a full inspection, inspectors will of course use the pupil - results on examinations and tests as an important source for their judgement about the “learning results” of the school.

In countries where there are no national, central examinations but an obligation of a school to develop its own examinations or to come to a judgement about individual students and their right to get a diploma or certificate in another way, the inspectorate can be involved in the evaluation of whether the tests and examinations that are given to students by the school are good enough (that is to say: covering the most important

attainment targets, at a reasonable level of difficulty, taken and processed well, ranked well).

Advising schools.

Traditionally many inspectorates had important tasks in advising – by request or not – heads and teachers about all kinds of issues: choice of school books, interpretation of national curricula, teaching methods, etc. In most countries now these tasks are done by advisors in regional or national offices and are separated from “inspection” although of course these advisors can use the outcomes of inspections as basis for their advisory work. But there is an important “effect of an advisory nature” in the daily work of inspectors – perhaps not intended as such but yet perceived by teachers and heads as “advice”. This effect comes in informal short talks “in between”; or in a short feedback given to a teacher after a classroom visit; but certainly in meetings where the provisional outcome of the full inspection (or another inspection) is presented and discussed. Almost all inspectorates say that this advisory work is not their explicit task. In the profiles the issue is an important one but it is difficult to grasp exactly what is done in the everyday – work of inspectorates. Later – paragraph 6.7. and 6.9. – I come back to it.

Advising authorities.

The boundary between “publishing” a report at system level about some thematic inspection or annually about the state of the art in education and sending specific advice to a ministry or parliament or regional authority is thin. If an inspectorate gives a clear judgement about a situation and also gives an analysis of the causes, then formal “advice” about what to do perhaps is not written, but that message is so clear from the report that in fact there is advice given. So, the statement in many profiles that inspectorates give no formal advice to the authorities will be true, but does not convey the full picture. Some inspectorates have official and formal advisory tasks about general issues of educational policy. In many inspectorates the Senior Chief Inspector participates in high level meetings with ministers and other decision makers. In some inspectorates there is a formal “duty of advice” about measures to be taken if a school is “below standards”. Further in paragraph 8.2.

Influence, public debate, publications.

The profiles are not very explicit on this issue, but there is a general tendency that inspectors have to be careful and discrete with public statements about issues in educational policy. Opinions about political issues under debate or about detailed aspects of “teaching” and “organisation of schools” (for example the issue of differentiation and individualisation) are not given in public or only in a rather indirect way. This policy has to do with necessary independence. Certainly

inspectors have not to speak or write about particular schools. On the other hand: in some countries it is felt a pity that the broad knowledge and experience of an inspectorate about “what works in schools” is kept within the corps. Books or films with “good practice” are published – sometimes also within the framework of a general report. It is not too easy to find out what exactly happens in this case, because the profiles do not give many details. And in most countries there is still little “hard” research about the “impact of inspection” in general and certainly not about this more general influence on public debate and on policy making – that is still more difficult to establish in a tangible way than the impact on school improvement as such. See in 6.9 and 6.10.

4. Summary of the comparative analysis.

Since summer 2008 a redrafted approach was established concerning the making of a “web – based” “descriptive analysis” of the Inspectorates of Education that are members of SICI. (“Descriptive analysis” in fact was the title of the “Blue Book” of 1999). This was done with a redrafted format for the writing of a profile for the inspectorates by their contact – persons; with an arrangement for a process of editing; and with the writing of a comparative analysis of the profiles. This summary of that analysis gives some headlines.

The state of the art

The headline of the analysis could be summarized in one sentence: among the members of SICI full inspection of all schools in their national systems is still the mainstay of the arrangements for inspecting schools, but with changes underway.

Full inspection

Fifteen of the 18 inspectorates have a system of “full inspection” of schools. In such a system all schools are inspected at regular intervals in time, against a national framework of indicators for good quality, with a small team of inspectors and – almost always – with published reports of the inspection. These fifteen are: the Czech Republic, Spain, Flanders, Hesse, Ireland, Northern – Ireland, the Netherlands, England, Portugal, Rhineland – Palatine, Saxony, Scotland, Sweden, the Slovak Republic, Wales. Denmark, Norway and Estonia do not have such a system. It is well – known that many other inspectorates in Europe and in other parts of the world also do the same type of full inspections.

The main characteristics of these fifteen full - inspection – arrangements:

- 1 All use comparable frameworks with „quality – definitions” for inspecting schools. With much similarity in the choice of domains (areas) of quality that matter. But with significant differences in wording and priorities and combining

- (sub-areas) in overarching concepts; and with still more significant differences in the indicators that are highlighted in these domains. And also with significant differences in the “illustrations” or “practice descriptions” that are in use in the instruments. Here much room for deeper analysis and cooperation within SICI exists. The profiles often do not answer the important question how precise and detailed the criteria and norms are and how detailed the observation and scoring forms are that are in use.
- 2 Is feedback given to teachers after a classroom-visit? 8 of 18 seem not to give any form of feedback to teachers; 3 of 18 do; 7 of 18 are not clear in the profile.
 - 3 All use interviews, questionnaires, meetings, observations, school documents, but with varying accents. Almost all ask rather much documentation in advance from schools. Electronic school files and other forms of traffic are beginning to be used. Almost all use test – results, examination – results (at various levels of standardization!) as one source for assessing the “learning results”. Data – banks, “warehouses”, are in a rapid development.
 - 4 Notice of a coming inspection to a school is given in advance, but varies from 2 to 180 days (half a year in Rhineland - Palatine). 7 say: 2 à 4 weeks; 5 say: 10 weeks or more; Ofsted: 2 days.
 - 5 The number of days in schools: most spend 3 or 4 days; 5 say: 1 is possible; flexible up to 12 days in large, complex schools.
 - 6 The number of inspectors in the school phase varies too: 7 say: one is possible if.... 10 say: at least 2, but most often 3 or 4. Most use flexible arrangements.
 - 7 About reports: almost all give an immediate oral feedback after the school phase. Reports are sent to the school as a draft (right of comment) after 5 – 45 days. A conference with the school after completion is held by 10; 6 do not, 2 are unclear about this. Reports are public (internet) in 15 inspectorates, in Germany this is still a problem. The length per school report varies from 10 to 80 pages. All say that the reports give a list of strengths and weaknesses of the school.
 - 8 The follow – up after a school – inspection is an important issue, because “at the end of the day” an inspection has to lead to improvement of schools and to improvement of education in general. So, the follow – up has much to do with the impact of the inspectorate – although not many inspectorates report substantial impact – research. Most profiles say that a school is obliged (or “is strongly expected” ...) to give a response to the report saying what the school is going to do and when; but often it is not clear if this response on paper is “formally obliged”. Mostly it is also not very clear if and how this response is judged as

- “adequate” by the inspectorate or by another institution with “authority”. 14 say – more or less - that this “agreement” is made between the school and inspectorate. A German type of agreement after a school inspection, called “Zielvereinbarung” is a rather heavy contract between the school itself; the authority (= Schulaufsicht); and the support agencies.
- 9 Eleven inspectorates have a clear and sharp regime for dealing with (very) weak schools; with agreements and repeated inspections and eventually handing over the “problem”- school to the authorities; “newer” inspectorates do not yet have such a regime.
 - 10 Advising schools or teachers as a task is rejected by 13 of the 18; 5 say that they do (but not very clear...). But several inspectorates of the 13 say that they do some form of feedback or have advising elements in informal talks or the closing sessions...
 - 11 Advising governments about educational issues and policy for 10 is a formal task. But all do this informally. Many have participation of their Senior Chief Inspector in the Management Board of the Ministry.

Self – evaluation in and by schools and its place in external school inspections.

In all countries schools are “obliged” or “strongly expected” to do their self – evaluations. And in some nine of the 18 (Flanders, Denmark, Spain, Ireland, Hesse, England, Rhineland – Palatine, Sweden, Slovakia, Estonia) these self evaluations are in use by inspectors as one of the sources for their assessment of “management, school development, organisation” of the school. Other inspectorates also use these self – evaluations in a more or less proportional mode of external inspection (see further in 6.5. and 7.)

Focus

Nine of the 18 inspectorates write: our primary focus is on school improvement. And 9 write: our primary focus is on “general accountability”. But: mission statements about this are not always 100 % sharp... Often something like “at the end of the day our work is about improvement of education in our country and in our schools” is said.

Other issues

- 1 Eleven inspectorates inspect non – state – schools in the same way as state – schools. Here we see a large variety of types of non – state - schools. Four say that these schools are not inspected at all.
- 2 Numbers of inspectors vary and are not proportional with the number of

inhabitants. Some examples: Spain 1400; Denmark 11 (!); Czech Republic 268; Norway 56; Netherlands 181; Saxony 43. Comparability is a problem, because it is not always clear whether associate inspectors, or contracted inspectors (OFSTED!) are counted in the same way as permanent staff.

- 3 Most inspectorates are functionally independent from their Ministry, but not structurally or financially.
- 4 All inspectorates have some induction scheme for new inspectors; and some in-service – training facilities. All ask 5 – 8 years of teaching/managing experience of - almost all – inspectors.
- 5 Eleven inspectorates have had an external audit or some other form of external evaluation of the inspectorate's work.
- 6 Most (12 of 18) say that dealing with complaints about teachers or schools is no real task (because the school itself is in charge) but nevertheless inspectors accept complaints and try to solve these and use them as signals for aspects of quality.
- 7 Thematic inspections of an issue at national level in a sample of schools are done by 15 inspectorates with big variations in topics and methods.
- 8 Almost all have or are starting to give a summarizing description and analysis of "the state of education in the country" based on all their inspections and other sources.
- 9 Inspection of staff is not done; only general judgements about "the quality of teaching" in a particular school are given. In Wales and Ireland and Northern – Ireland some openings in this sensitive issue are made in the last two years.

Changing arrangements

It is clear without much explanation that a rather complete inspection of all important aspects of quality of a school, and with a rather precise and deep judgement based on enough observations of classes and enough meetings with staff of schools and parents and pupils, and based on enough study of material and files of students,... requires much time and work. (I leave aside the problems of validity and reliability that lie behind these issues of design of a full inspection of a school). And most inspectorates do not have that time and staff. Solutions for this problem are varying.

The interval between inspections could increase. It varies in the countries: 2 inspectorates have an interval of three years, 5 of four or five years, and six of more than five years. The general feeling is that longer than four years does not serve well enough the guaranteeing function of the inspectorates: taking care that no child has education

below standards. So, a second solution is to combine periodic inspections with thematic inspections (where a sample of schools is inspected only for a certain theme), or with unannounced inspections. In this way of “smart planning” Northern - Ireland for example has an interval of 7 years but succeeds in being in touch with all schools once in four or five years.

A second solution could be that the inspections are done in a more proportional way: if the previous inspection showed no serious quality problems in a school, and if the self - evaluation of the school shows no problems, the inspection could be rather short and quick – if that inspection shows doubts about the quality of certain important aspects of quality, the inspectorates could decide to plan a more complete inspection in the short term. Seven inspectorates have such proportional schemes: the Czech Republic, Northern –Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Saxony, Scotland, and Wales. In the Netherlands the basis for this type of inspection is a risk- analysis of the schools, based on facts about their results (tests, examinations), signals about quality (complaints, sudden change in numbers of students,...) and previous inspections. Only if there seems to be a risk, the school is visited. Flanders combines both approaches in their new system of differentiated inspection: all schools are visited in a short inspection of one day and after that it is decided what will be the focus and “level” of the following inspection. The focus also could be a promising development in the school that is inspected.

Much more is to be said about these changing arrangements of “full - or not so full – inspection” of schools. See paragraph 7.

These important strategic changes probably are the most interesting issue for SICI to serve its function of “common learning”. But many more issues are relevant for new SICI – projects or workshops: the rich source of thematic inspections, an analysis of the annual reports, a real comparative analysis of the frameworks, the studies about impact of school inspections, the issue of giving advice or feedback to teachers or to schools, the sensitive issue of inspecting individual teachers and the follow – up of such an inspection, the inspection of “good governance of schools”, the regimes for detecting schools that seem to deteriorate into very weak schools and the possibilities for prevention of that. And much more.

(This summarizing text has also been published – early 2010 - in the SICI – review)

5. Some questions and issues about the work of inspectorates; an introduction.

In this paragraph I will raise some questions and issues about the work of inspectorates. These issues lie behind the comparative texts and tables in following paragraphs.

5.1. About evaluation as a core task of Inspectorates of Education.

Libraries are filled with texts about “evaluation” in an educational context: what is it? How to assess the value of a certain issue like “the learning results of this pupil” or “what this school has reached with these pupils” or “how good this educational system is in compensating the handicaps of children stemming from families with poor cultural backgrounds?” or “how good this teacher is in organising activities that motivate children to develop higher learning?” – to mention only a few examples of objects of evaluation.

Without going into the literature and into definitions etc. it will be clear for all readers who are not unfamiliar with “educational evaluation” that I have used already the key – word: “to assess the value of something”. That always means three things:

- That the evaluator knows the object that has to be evaluated;
- That the evaluator does not hesitate to give a judgement about the value of what she or he has seen;
- That that judgement has some standing, some convincing power; that means several things but anyhow that the judgement is given against a formulated criterion with a norm.

All three aspects elicit a number of questions about the work of inspectorates of education.

5.2. Do inspectors really know a school?

The first aspect gives a number of important questions. When we speak about “inspection of schools” it goes without saying that inspectors have to know about the schools that they have to evaluate. The word “to inspect” stems from the Latin “to look inside”; in order to know. The public expects from inspectors of schools that “they know”. All inspectorates have to cope with various questions in defining the “to know”. How extensive should that “to know” be before a judgement may be given? How many days must a team of inspectors walk around in a school? How many notebooks of pupils must be seen? How many lessons? Of how many teachers? The inspectorate of Lower Saxony in Germany has an iron rule: 50 % of the teachers of a school must be observed in at least one lesson period of twenty minutes – is that enough? Is it possible to formulate a rule here? So, issues of frequency, the size of the group of inspectors, the length of the school inspection, are important. They are covered in the profiles.

Another important issue: can inspectors give a judgement about a school without going in some depth into the quality of subject teaching? And how many subjects must be inspected with how many lessons and analyses of examinations etc. etc.? OFSTED – the English inspectorate - has worked in the early nineties with an inspection mode that

indeed did so – with teams of 8/10 inspectors during 8/10 working days for an average primary school. Now there is no inspectorate that does so as a general method of inspection; some inspectorates inspect in a sample of schools where “full inspection” is done also one subject in a more thorough way (Lower – Saxony for example). Subject inspections in a more profound way are done in the form of thematic inspections: a team of inspectors who are specialized in a subject inspect in a sample of schools the teaching of subject X and report – mostly - about that per school and also at national level about the “state of teaching X”. The profiles show that most inspectorates do this type of thematic inspection also for subjects; but not all. But such a thematic inspection about for example the subject “geography teaching” in primary education in a sample of 200 primary schools does not say anything about that topic in a school that is inspected in the usual “full inspection”- mode and that is not part of the sample. So, the question remains if in general the quality of a school is inspected profoundly enough? If not, is it also necessary that the subject teaching is inspected in a more profound way? The profiles do not give much specific clarity about this issue, but it is reasonable to conclude from the facts about intensity of a full inspection (for example maximum three days with two inspectors...) that it is not possible to do one or more detailed subject inspections as meant here. So, the answer seems to be that for a general quality judgement about a school specific subject inspections are not necessary.

Another example: in order “to know” enough about the management and leadership in a school, is it necessary for inspectors to participate in meetings of teachers that are chaired by a school head? Or to watch him or her in his or her acting in a conflict with a teacher about something? Or to tap a number of telephone calls of the head with complaining parents? Etc.

The number of examples can easily be enlarged; also for aspects of quality such as “the pedagogical behaviour of teachers”, “the coordination among teachers of one grade”, the contacts between school and industry in vocational schools”, etc.

The general question is about the validity of “what inspectors see and analyse in schools”. With two aspects:

- Do they see the right things in terms of activities and work?
- And is that “seeing” broad and deep enough to serve as a basis for a judgement about the quality?

It will be no surprise that many discussions about these issues in and around inspectorates have been held and still are held and that various inspectorates have made varying decisions. However: the profiles show that most inspectorates found a mode of “full inspection of schools” that seems to satisfy the needs for this validity in the first rounds. In some of them, movements are shown in the direction of a broader

diversification of modes of inspection (proportionality with self – evaluation, risk – based inspections, a mode where the aspects that the inspectorate wants to inspect are mixed with preferences of schools for topics or themes). See further in paragraph 7. But the ‘validity’ question does not seem to be a big topic in the profiles. Personally I have some indications – based on visits and discussions and talks – that perhaps in some cases the importance of this topic is underestimated. In several inspectorates the trend is away from traditional very heavy inspection models that tried to inspect everything, but there are signs in some places (e.g. England, the Netherlands,) that questions are beginning to be raised about whether, in some cases, inspection models have become too ‘light’ and some correction may be occurring. I think getting this balance right continues to be a key concern for most/all inspectorates. See also paragraph 7 and also in paragraph 9 about “inter – personal rating reliability”.

5.3. Do inspectors really give a judgement?

The second aspect: that a judgement is given. I know that in several countries there have been discussions about this; although most profiles do not report extensively about these discussions and histories of the “making of the inspection framework”. The basic question in some circles (mainly from “progressive wings”) is: what gives outsiders – however good, professional, honest, independent, they are – the right to give a judgement about a particular school – even if their basis of knowing is valid enough? That question is of course one of the basic ones behind the worldwide movement to initiate a kind of professional, external, independent, periodical judgement of schools. The idea is that it is good for schools to be judged; as a kind of stimulus to become better. And that it is good for parents to know a judgement about schools in their neighbourhood; that enables them to take their responsibility in making choices and /or in taking civil responsibility in supporting and governing schools as “places in society”. And that it is good for the authorities to know more about “value for money” and the quality of the subsystem “education” in relation to important societal issues.

I leave that “logic” behind inspection as a phenomenon aside here now, because I want to draw attention to four other aspects of the “judgement” as core task of inspectors. The “political and societal logic” is discussed in many books and papers about this phenomenon of “new–style inspectorates”. See annex 3.

d. A descriptive mirror? Only a record sheet?

There have been tendencies that inspectors are only “mirroring” what they have seen in the school– so, only giving the so–called facts – without accompanying these facts with a judgement. The other side is that sometimes there is a tendency to give only the judgement in a very short report, perhaps only in a table with scores on a number of indicators – as is done sometimes in newspapers when the results of tests about cars or

radios are published. Without describing the facts (“the knowing”) on which these judgements are based. For some issues (cars, TV’s,...) this works, because consumers trust the organisation that delivers the judgement and are only interested in the judgement because they want to take decisions.

Of course this discussion has to do with questions about the functions of an inspection of a school. Is that function more to stimulate the school to develop itself and thus to provide the school with a “mirror” from outside? Or is it more a judgement with a function for the environment of the school – parents who have a school choice, authorities who are accountable? Or is it a mixture? I think that we have to say that all inspectorates have tried to find some balance in these two possible core functions. That is also shown in the profiles. In most cases this mix of functions is mentioned. And sometimes this mix is also visible in descriptions of the way of reporting after a school inspection. If, for example, a conference about the report is organised for a broader discussion with the school management and the board of governors, this shows that the inspectors want to do the mirroring seriously and want to be available for a serious consultation about the meaning of their judgements. In this approach (the inspection report mainly has a stimulating function) it is understandable that people ask for clear and not too vague judgements; but of course these have to be underpinned by clear “knowing”: facts that have been reported in the inspection report. The need for clear and rather extensive judging is growing if schools become accustomed to “new-style” inspection. But if there is no clarity about the publication of the report and if there still is some vagueness about consequences of judgements in terms of “measures” of the authorities (either “punishment” or “rewarding”), schools show hesitation about the giving of clear, bold, judgements by the inspectors.

This issue is not always made very tangible in the profiles.

My experience is that in new inspectorates, the tendency to be a little bit careful with bold judgements is clear; but also that after a relatively short period of becoming accustomed to the phenomenon “inspection” most schools – and in particular the better ones – ask more for sharper judgements because that provides more help to identify issues for improvement than over careful wording.

A more specific comparative investigation into this issue by analyzing a sample of inspection reports about inspected schools - from various inspectorates in various languages! – could be very helpful for a better insight into this important issue.

b. The context of a school in the judgement.

Strongly connected with the “judgement – issue “ is the “context – issue”: is it honest to give a judgement about where a school has reached with its students without taking into account the background of the students in terms of family – circumstances etc? The

“contextual judgement” is still a not too easy aspect of inspection in many inspectorates – often because reliable facts at pupil level about these socio-economic-cultural aspects are not available. In some countries this leads to the tendency that the learning results are not included in the judgement. But that is of course unsatisfactory.

Some of the “older” inspectorates describe how they weigh the context of a school in proportion with the judgement of the “raw” quality as such: Wales, the Netherlands, Northern – Ireland, Flanders. OFSTED has the most developed practice in this issue in the so – called CVA: Context – Value – Added Inspection. The principle can be described rather easily: test results of all pupils entering the school are compared with the same type of facts about learning results at the end after x years and the “gain in learning” is then connected with facts about the socio-cultural-economic background of the pupils. But of course this is only possible if many facts from various sources are available and comparable for use in such a huge database. In many countries learning results in terms of test results or standardized examination results are not available; and in more countries facts relating to the start of the school career do not exist. And quite often there is also discussion about the question as to whether people want that. Also facts about the context are not always available. In addition, there is a discussion about the desirability. Rather often the question is asked: “Is the danger of reduction of “education” towards measurable and simple things not too big?”

But more and more a development in the direction of context-valued judgements is apparent. In the German inspectorates this is still a difficult issue, because the test – and examinations side is still under development and also the context – facts about schools and families are not very well usable, apart from the privacy – discussions that are rather sensitive in Germany. (see the profiles of Hesse and Saxony)

c. Judging the teaching or the teacher?

What is the character of the judgement about what a teacher is doing with a group of students in a classroom or a laboratory or wherever? Of course the basic question for inspection is if that work is “good teaching”? In other words: “the teaching as such, as it is intended to instigate learning by students” or better: “the organisation of the start and continuation of a learning process by students”. I leave aside here the discussion about the indicators that then have to be taken into account (see for example Meyer, 2004); and the discussion about the bipolar relation between “teaching” and “learning”.

The issue here is something else: is the judgement about “the teacher” who is acting or only about “the teaching” as it is observed? In fact all inspectorates say that they are judging “the teaching and learning in general as it can be observed in a school”. So, “the learning and teaching” is one of the aspects of the quality of the school. In particular, in the early stages in the life of inspectorates often this issue is an important one for teachers

and teacher- unions in the phase of acceptance of the new phenomenon of an inspectorial judgement about the quality of a school. They are afraid that the inspectorate is coming into classrooms to give a judgement about the individual teacher. And in all papers and reports of inspectorates this same statement is made: it is not about the individual teacher that we give judgements but about the teaching in general. This has been an important issue which has become more clearly focused as inspectorates move to lighter sampling of lessons in schools. With older, “heavier” inspection models a dangerous assumption developed that inspectors were coming to evaluate each individual teacher. Although even then that was probably never really valid. The newer “lighter” models make it very clear that “learning and teaching” is being “sampled” only at school level. And clear too is that there is no judgement about individual teachers. It is clearer perhaps than it was a couple of years ago in starting inspecting schemes that the responsibility to systematically assess their individual teachers lies with schools and local authorities and not with inspectors to do it for them.

But; in tension with this statement, most teachers are keen on some kind of feedback of the inspector(s) who was (were) in their classroom... and one issue in most of the profiles is indeed how inspectorates cope with this clear wish of most teachers. And although a certain feedback – no matter how it is scheduled or organised – is not intended as a judgement, it does have aspects of “tell me please what I did well or not so well..”. That is exactly what often comes from feedback sheets of teachers after an inspection: it is good to have an expert in your classroom who gives a professional feedback. That is something else as a judgement with some kind of consequences for placement or career perspectives.... It seems to be true what Maurice Smith, former Senior Chief Inspector of OFSTED has said about this: that it is a matter of being more accustomed to inspection as a “school business” and as an activity that is intended to give prompts to improvement (in a speech in May 2006 “The second term of the new inspection arrangements”). Another aspect of this same issue: the judgement of the inspectors about the quality of management and leadership is of course in most schools – and certainly in the smaller ones – in fact also implicitly a judgement about the manager(s) as a person. In the same way, the judgement “the teaching in the natural sciences in the age groups 11 and 12 is below standards” in fact is also a judgement about the teachers who do their teaching there – and certainly in a smaller secondary school in fact this judgement is about Mrs. X and Mr. Y. But apart from these “technical aspects” all inspectorates have to cope with the fact that “good teaching” cannot be delivered by weak teachers... That becomes very visible in the schools that have to be judged as “very weak” (or other formulas): almost all inspectorates have as a norm for that – among other ones – that important indicators for the teaching are below standards in several departments or grades of the school. And in fact that means of course that there are simply too many weak teachers; and also that the management of the school has not been able to cope with this big problem. So, in one way or another, the link between a judgement about “the teaching in general” and “the

quality of the teacher” is present and I think that teachers rightly feel that this link can have something to do with their own position – as becomes clear in the situation that in a “very weak” school a number of teachers are fired or replaced – as is happening in some, but very few, countries and cases.

I suppose that this connection with the judgement about the individual teachers will become more important in the near future (see further in 8.5.).

5.4. Criteria and norms. What if a school is really bad?

The fourth aspect in the “judgement” that I want to mention separately is: criteria and norms.

All inspectorates say in their profiles that they have a set of criteria for the quality aspects that they inspect. And although this is not always said explicitly, there are also norms. If for example a standard for the criterion about learning and teaching is: “the learning and teaching in the majority of classes is organised in an interactive way and stimulates the students to develop their own learning strategies” there have to be norms for the evaluation of what is observed. For example: talking about the norm for what the inspectors judge as “sufficient interactive learning and teaching”: what percentage of the total number of observed situations has to be “interactive”? And what is “the majority of classes”? Apart from these norms about the quantity, the inspectorate has to have a clear idea – perhaps also a definition – about what is “interactive teaching and learning” and also about a concept as “learning strategies” and about the concept “stimulation by teachers”.

Here we touch on very important matters of quality of the inspection work – one of the usual issues in social research: the methods and techniques of observation, the coding of rough observations into standardized concepts; the rules for scoring a certain observation or a proportion of observations as “sufficient” or “good” and other rules for scoring and judging, etc. Also very important are the measures that are necessary in order to strengthen the inter-personal rating reliability within a group of inspectors, the maintenance of strong codes of interpretation and exchangeability, the exact definition of the room for personal and subjective opinions of inspectors, etc. Training, continuous rotation of groups of inspectors and individuals, sessions about case – discussions and case – analysis, video – training about interpretations of observations, etc are very important elements here. The profiles do not give many details about the formulation of criteria and norms, neither about the measures that are taken in order to strengthen the quality of the inspection work. In the paragraphs about induction programmes for new inspectors and about in-service training we find something. And in most profiles something is said also about the issue of criteria and norms. But a lot of more specific comparative and analytical work can be done here. And that should be very useful

because it could help inspectorates to strengthen their quality and to learn from each other.

The issue of criteria, standards, norms becomes of course burning in a situation where the inspectors have the tendency to evaluate a school as “below standard” or “very weak” or “to be taken under special measures” or whatever language is used in such a case. It is of course important that the norms then are very clear and undisputed. The profiles do not give details here about these norms, but there has been SICI – work here (workshops, reports) that gives more. The core is that the learning results in terms of examinations or tests are below the standard of what may be expected of a school in comparative circumstances (see the context – issue above) for more than one or two years. In addition, that the judgement about the teaching and learning is that these are below expected standards in a majority of classes and grades. Plus, for example, that the judgement is that the leadership is not good enough to do the necessary work in order to bring about improvement of the school. Here – in the process of selecting the most crucial indicators for quality that have to be taken into account when decisions have to be taken about “very weak” - the relation with research about school improvement and school development is clear (see the literature of Fullan, Rolff, Hargreaves, Lagerweij, Scheerens a.o.). I leave that aside, as I do with the important link between the inspectorate’s work (in diagnosing this situation) and the work of the organisations that have to help (support, coach, train,...) schools in these situations. In the profiles of some inspectorates this link is reported (Scotland, England). Also in some German inspectorates clear agreements are made between schools, authorities and support agencies.

6. Core Task now: full inspection of schools; some similarities and differences.

6.1. Introduction.

As stated in paragraphs 3 and 5 the large majority of European inspectorates have as their core task the inspection of all schools in their national systems; once in a not too large number of years (with a range between three and six or seven). Such an inspection has to result in a “picture” of the school – a judgement about its quality. The so – called “full” or “whole” or “total” or “complete” inspection has a few general characteristics. The most important ones have been mentioned in paragraphs 3 and 5. In this paragraph 6, I want to describe a number of interesting similarities and differences among the SICI – inspectorates in some of the most important aspects of “full inspection”. Some overlap with the descriptions and analyses in the paragraphs 3 and 5 is unavoidable, but not a serious problem because the viewpoint is different.

Some of the differences have to do with the “life – cycle” of the systems of “full inspection” in the countries.

It is clear that – in the group of profiles - there are two generations of inspectorates doing full inspections – or whole inspections or complete inspections – of schools. The first generation – starting from 1991 on - has already done two or even three rounds of inspection of all schools in the country and these inspectorates had to look for an answer to the question whether or not you repeat time and again the standard form of full inspection or not. I already wrote about this issue and about some answers.

Inspectorates of the second generation that started later (from 2003 on) are still in their first round of inspecting all schools with their system of full inspection. This first round takes 3 – 6 years and can only start after the period of preparation for the modern style of inspecting schools. In some countries, this preparation and the related sometimes heavy and sharp political debates and tensions, have taken several years; Austria probably is the champion with debates that last already more than twelve years and are not yet finished with a clear conclusion and decision. Also in France, in German Länder, in Norway, in Sweden and in some Swiss Kantons this period of deliberation and struggle was long and sometimes difficult.

The first generation in the group of profiles started in the period 1991 – 1998. To this first generation belong the inspectorates of England (OFSTED), Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, Flanders, Wales, Portugal, Ireland, the Czech Republic. The second generation started from 2003 on; they often looked at the “older” inspectorates in order to learn from their experiences. To this second generation belong: Sweden, Norway, Slovakia, most parts of Spain, the 16 German Länder with their systems of full inspection – but all a little bit different, Estonia, the German – speaking Swiss cantons, France. Some of these inspectorates now are starting their second rounds and are also experimenting with systems of risk analysis or/and proportional inspections. Denmark, Norway and Estonia have no system of full inspection – see further in 7.

But in all inspectorates a vital issue of course is the definition of the aspects or areas or domains of quality that we as inspectorates are going to look for and to judge in terms of very good or good etc. In paragraph 6.2 I write something more about the “frameworks for inspection” that are in use: the “areas of quality” that are estimated to be important; and the “indicators” and “practice descriptors” that are used in the inspection process that has to lead to a judgement about the quality of the school in these areas of quality. In 6.3. the issue about “judgements”, touched already in paragraph 5, is dealt with. In the rest of paragraph 6 other issues are dealt with: in 6.9. the important issue of what is done and can be done after an inspection in order to improve the impact – in relation with 6.10 about mission statements of inspectorates. In 6.5. the use of other sources and observations of inspectors is dealt with, e.g. examination -results, but also the self – evaluations of schools; in 6.4. the question how many teachers have to be seen and other “sampling issues”; in 6.7 about feedback for teachers and schools, in 6.8. about reports. In these pieces I give also the comparative figures in terms of: “x of 18 inspectorates do z;

y of them do q”...

6.2. The inspection framework.

a. The level of “quality areas”.

As I have already outlined, a full inspection covers a number of areas (or domains) of quality (for example the learning and teaching itself as the core process of schools, and: the learning results, and: the management, a.o.). Important in all countries is the decision about these areas of quality that will be inspected: who decides and how? In several countries government with parliament decide about the areas of quality that have to be inspected and thus judged. The list of areas or domains is laid down in a law – a law on inspection (more and more) or a law on schools or education – in that case inspection is arranged in a separate paragraph. Sometimes “areas” are mentioned “domains” or “aspects of quality”. (see the profiles for lists of these aspects in the various inspectorates). A recent comparative overview of these lists is not available – and the making of that list is a lot of patient and careful gathering work plus analysis of all types of concepts in various languages. But also without such a complete analysis it is clear from the profiles that there is a lot of similarity among the countries (governments or inspectorates) in these lists of areas – sometimes with some differences in wording. There is a core with the following areas:

- The learning results in terms of results on examinations or tests and also in terms of more general outcomes (attitudes, general competencies, and such terms).
- Efficiency of the school in terms of average number of years of schooling before pupils have a diploma; and in terms of percentages of incoming students leaving with a diploma, a.o.
- The process of learning and teaching; a very broad area that also covers classroom – organisation, differentiation, good structuring of the teaching, enough opportunities for independent or self – governed learning, monitoring of the learning of students, coordination among teachers of one group of pupils, longitudinal coordination, activating students, cohesion among all teachers and other staff in the school and a shared vision on teaching and learning, and other elements.
- The curriculum that is offered and its coherence, its alignment over periods and cohorts and years, its covering of the prescribed national curriculum, its adaptation to the needs of the students, a.o.

- The differentiation that is organised in the school in order to meet the differences among pupils in learning pace, leaning needs, needs for help, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, a.o.
- The (pedagogical) climate of the school; the ethos, the culture ; in some frameworks split into two levels: the school as a whole and the class or group.
- The care for students with special learning or educational needs.
- The leadership and management of the school.
- The process of school development; its continuity, the planning, the participation of all involved.

Some other areas that are found in less frameworks:

- Enough learning time for students is organized (some take this into “learning and teaching” as a subarea, in the same way as I mentioned above already some other subareas).
- The evaluation of students’ work and progress (some take this area as a sub area into “learning and teaching”)
- The conditions from outside: the level of funding, the level of staffing, the social environment (often taken into account in the context – valued judgement), the quality of the building or furniture, a.o.
- Communication with parents and other stakeholders in the environment (some see this as a subarea in “management”)
- Satisfaction of students, parents, other stakeholders (some see this as a subarea in several other areas)

It happens that in countries specific issues of quality – sometimes of a political nature related to national discussions or concerns – are given to the inspectorate as specific points of attention in the school inspections. Whether they fit well into the general framework or not; the inspectorate simply gets the “order” or task to do these specific inspections – included in the general inspections or in a thematic inspection (see paragraph 3 or 8.1) or in a separate visit to all schools if the issue is urgent enough.

A few examples may illustrate this:

- a. The issue of overweight of younger children and the concern if schools do enough

- to combat that disease and to educate children in “good food”; for example by offering healthy food in the school restaurant in countries like England and Germany; but also in the curriculum for biology or other subjects; and in certain projects etc.
- b. After some problems in the early 2000’s with Islamic extremism in the Netherlands and some doubts about the quality of citizenship education in schools in general and Islamic subsidized schools in particular, the government – after parliamentary debates – requested the inspectorate to develop a framework for “good citizenship education” in a multicultural society (this was done in cooperation with representatives of all groups and with the national curriculum institute SLO) and since then all (full) inspections of schools are enriched with this inspection trail. And apart from the usual full inspections some thematic inspections about this issue have been carried out in all Islamic schools (some 50 now). Some schools have been brought under more intensive monitoring by the inspectorate specifically for this issue and in 2009 for one Islamic secondary school the subsidy was announced to be finished for this reason (the decision to close the school was taken in March 2010). See the Dutch profile for more details.
 - c. In France in 2009 a national project and discussion about “French identity” started and one of the issues was the learning of the national anthem (which has been also a discussion in some other countries). The inspectors in the Académies (regions) were charged with the task to keep an eye on this in all their contacts with schools.

For some of these types of issues it is possible to embed them into the general framework – for other ones this is more difficult.

Back to the “making of the framework”: most inspectorates write that they base the proposals for the selection of these areas on a mixture of the so – called “good schools” or “effective schools” research with “common sense” and the opinions of experts and teacher unions and teachers’ professional associations. There is much literature about the question which “quality areas” matter most for the success of schools in terms of results of pupils. One of the broadest sources is “Educational Evaluation, Assessment, and Monitoring; a systemic approach” by Jaap Scheerens, Cees Glas and Sally M. Thomas.. It gives a summary of research about which quality areas count most and concludes with a list of 13 areas (all these areas have been mentioned above already, sometimes in other words)

It is not surprising that in cultures that are as comparable as these in European countries – although there are important differences too! – this core - list of “areas of quality” is rather easy to write down. These “areas of quality” are estimated to be so important –

almost everywhere in Europe - that the inspectorate is obliged to give a judgement about these areas in all school inspections.

Certainly we see important differences in the lists in the profiles; some lists are shorter or longer. Often this is only a matter of wording and of grouping some areas into one overarching area. Some inspectorates work with a smaller number of overarching questions that have to be answered in the inspection of a school – for example OFSTED, Wales or Scotland. A grouping of the quality areas into a few “broader” “areas” seems to be possible very well. For example under the three “key questions” or “principal issues of quality”: input (management, leadership, curriculum,...), processes (learning and teaching, climate,...) and outcomes (learning results). But in this approach then the “sub - questions” cover the same type of “areas of quality” as mentioned above. Some inspectorates also give this type of “subareas”, but formulate these as separate “areas of quality”. The inspectorate of Wales works with seven broad questions (for example “how well are learners guided and supported?”) and for each question there is a table listing “aspects of provision” to be evaluated and reported on and “criteria” to help inspectors to reach their judgements. A closer look at the “aspects of provision” shows that these are to a large degree the same as the “subareas” or so that other inspectorates list.

So, most of the differences do not seem to be very real expressions of differing ideas about the quality that people in countries want to see in their schools.

A deeper and more detailed analysis of the frameworks and their lists of “quality areas” could be useful in order to see if indeed there is enough “common basis” for a European view on “quality of schools” which I think indeed is the case.

From the profiles it is not very clear how the processes of design, consultation and decision-making in the countries of Europe - about the selection of the areas are designed and are run. From my experience I know that in several countries the debates are rather “warm” but not very broad in society. I have to leave this interesting issue (interesting seen from viewpoints in sociology or political sciences) aside. One example may illustrate the issue: in the Netherlands the quality area “management and leadership” is not in the list of nine quality areas that is in the law on inspection. The background is a discussion between parliament and government in the years 2001 – 2002, influenced by resistance from circles in the associations of school boards of non – state schools and the associations of heads of schools. The compromise - outcome was that the quality area should not been inspected in the general inspection of all schools, but if a school seemed to be weak a second – more focused and deeper - inspection should follow in due course and in that deeper inspection the leadership and management should be inspected as one of the possible causes for the quality problems.

Similar problems existed – in the Netherlands and in Flanders but very probably also in

other countries – about the taking of “pedagogy” or “pedagogical climate” or so into the list. Because this area of course is directly connected with not only the professional freedom of the teacher(s) but also with denominational and philosophical convictions of the school board – in particular in non – state schools. In all countries this area seems to be accepted – sometimes after rather long and tough discussions with some teacher unions or certain groups of denominational schools. But it remains a sensible issue how far this goes.

Another example: have inspectors the right to give a negative judgement about certain teaching methods (“too directive, too much explaining, too few interactive”)?

In the profiles, the information about these discussions and interpretations is not very visible. Sometimes it is said that the inspection framework has been developed in processes of discussions with all involved; and that there is a continued opportunity for adaptation. Most “older” inspectorates report about “generations” of their frameworks (Scotland, OFSTED, and the Netherlands). It would be very interesting to investigate deeper these adaptations and the discussions also in “newer” inspectorates and their countries about these issues. These discussions and difficulties of course reflect the discussions in society about development and about education of new generations. I do not know inspectorates that publish reports about these content – discussions; discussions about aims and content of education and their translation into the framework for inspection with its indicators and criteria and norms; discussions that perhaps do not come to a kind of consensus; and about what that means for political decision – making and political action. Many inspectorates report in their profiles that they have to be a little bit reluctant here in order to keep their independence unquestioned.

My conclusion from the profiles and the websites – as far as these are accessible in languages that I can understand more or less – is that in principle all inspectorates have won these discussions in that sense that also about sensible issues like those mentioned or – some extra - “quality of the management of staff ” or “quality of care for students with learning difficulties” or “quality of the stimulating of divergent thinking” or “quality of the value education for younger children” it is accepted that this type of indicator belongs to the set that the inspectorate uses. And this is accepted broadly because there is apparently a general feeling in the countries (public, ministries, inspectorates) that these things are important when we want judgements of inspectors about the quality of schools; judgements that “we” want to use in school choice and accountability processes.

However, two remarks have to be made.

Although in general the above is true, there are certainly important differences among the inspectorates in the level of detail and the formulation of this type of indicators. And in these sensible issues often “the devil is in the detail”.... But a more detailed analysis of all

the frameworks (in some cases only possible after translation!) and working papers (idem) of the inspectorates goes beyond the scope of this paper.

Secondly; even where as such it is accepted that these important indicators belong to the issues about which inspectors have to give a judgement – that does not always mean that inspectors indeed give sharp and precise judgement about these indicators. That becomes visible in reports about schools; and in some profiles and other literature it is visible because teachers or parents who are asked for it in evaluations about the impact and usefulness of inspection reports say that these are “too general, too vague”.

It will be clear that here important comparative work could be done; also in SICI – projects and workshops: what is the “best” level of detail and sharpness; and the best type of wording (more accent on “good practices seen in a school” or – contrary - more reporting about “bad things”). Impact – research about inspection reports in schools is still rare and these differences among inspectorates in the “setup” and wording and style and sharpness of reports have not been investigated in a comparative way as far as I know.

See also paragraph 6.8 about reports of inspection of schools.

The level of “indicators” within “quality areas” and the level of “practice descriptors” within the indicators.

It is not possible for inspectors to give a judgement about a “quality area” directly based on direct observation in a school; most areas are too broad and too complex to do that in a responsible and valid way. That is the reason that for these “areas of quality” the inspectorate has to formulate a number of “indicators” that make it possible to “break down” the “area of quality” and to come to a more or less detailed judgement.

There is a third layer of “quality expressions”; namely the layer where indicators are broken down into “observable characteristics” or “practice descriptors” of the indicator. It is important to see this “three layer concept of quality” in the profiles of the inspectorates.

In a table:

<i>layer</i>	<i>Example</i>
Area of quality	The learning and teaching in the school
Indicators (of the Area)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The teaching is well – structured. b. The learning of the pupils often is in interactive processes with other pupils. c.
Observable characteristics or “practice descriptors” of an Indicator	<p>Practice descriptors for the example b :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pupils take initiatives – when such is suitable - for asking questions or cooperation with other pupils. 2. The teacher organizes various opportunities for pupils to cooperate in certain tasks. 3.

Alas, there is no unity in terminology here among the inspectorates of SICI. It is possible that – for example – an inspectorate speaks about “domain of quality” or “indicators” at the first layer and about “aspects” or even “areas” at the second layer.... Or about “subareas” or “aspects” at the second layer and “indicators” at the third layer. In most profiles however, the three layers are recognizable; with a little bit of close reading.

A good example of this “problem” is the profile of Hesse. It mentions a list of seven quality areas and within each of these some “dimensions” are given. So, for example, for the area “school culture” the dimensions mentioned are: “educational tenor”, “school life”, “cooperation and communication with the external environment”. And it is then said that for each of these “dimensions” qualitative standards are formulated in the form of “criteria”. In all school inspections all quality areas and all dimensions are covered, but not all criteria, due to the limited time. It is not too difficult to recognize the levels of “areas’ and “subareas”(= dimensions) and the “indicators”(criteria) in which the “norm” for good quality is already formulated: the indicator “is” there or not. From the website www.iq.hessen.de where the complete framework may

be found (in German) it is clear that many “criteria” (= indicators) are already so precise and detailed that a “translation” into “practice descriptors” is not necessary.

The profile of the Czech Inspectorate illustrates this same issue also very well: eight “main evaluation areas” are mentioned with each a small number of “criteria for evaluation” (= subareas) and these “criteria” have all a not too large number of “sub – criteria for evaluation” (= “indicators” with a normative loading). Also in this example some indicators are rather specific, almost at the level that I should mention “practice descriptors”. It is said explicitly that these sub – criteria (indicators) are not meant to be comprehensive, so there is freedom for inspectors to work with them flexibly.

We could conclude that there is a problem with the grouping of the “quality expressions” into “levels”. And a second problem exists in the connection between “observation” and “norm”. There is a third problem with the level of detail for each of the descriptions at the three levels of expressions of quality. Some inspectorates are much more detailed in their descriptions of the second and third levels in their frameworks. It seems that this has to do with the freedom that inspectors have in their judgement; and also with the authority that the inspectorate has and with the sensitivity in the educational arena...

In the profiles most inspectorates have only given – as requested – a rather general description in headlines of these frameworks. Some refer to their websites where more details may be found – in most inspectorates only in their national languages.

b. Illustrations.

In order to show some of the similarities and differences I copy here three pieces of text from the profiles. The first one is the list of three “domains of quality” (at the first level, that of “areas of quality”) in use in Rhineland – Palatine; with 11 dimensions (second layer; mentioned above the level of indicators).

1 Quality Area: ‘Preconditions and Conditions’ with the dimensions:

- I. Educational, political and legal requirements*
- II. Factors of location*
- III. Personnel and materiel resources, external support*
- IV. Pupil and School environment*

2 ***Quality Area: ‘School management and teaching/learning processes’ with the dimensions:***

- V. *School leadership and management*
- VI. *Professionalism of personnel*
- VII. *School life*
- VIII. *Objectives and strategies of school quality development*
- IX. *Quality of lessons*

1 ***Quality Area ‘Achievements and Effects’ with the dimensions***

- X. *Subject area competence*
- XI. *Satisfaction of participants*

In each dimension (read: “indicator” but as may be seen easily some of these “dimensions” or “indicators” are in fact “quality areas”....) qualitative standards are defined in the form of ‘Criteria’ From the profile it is not 100 % clear whether this layer of “criteria for dimensions” is a subdivision of the second layer or that in fact it is the third layer of “practice descriptors” that gives directly observable specifications. During inspections all qualitative areas and dimensions are covered. However, in the limited time of an inspection, not all the criteria in the school quality framework of Rhineland Palatinate are dealt with in the same depth and breadth. Therefore the inspectors use selected, prioritised criteria. The complete framework is to be found - in German – on the website www.aqs.rlp.de.

The second example that I quote (changed a little bit) is from the Scottish profile:

“Using the quality indicators in “How Good Is Our School? “ (see on <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hgiosjte3.pdf>) we evaluate performance of schools using the following five broad indicators (=“area”=“domain”; the first layer !; JvB)

- 1 *Improvements in performance*
- 2 *Learners’ experiences*
- 3 *The curriculum*
- 4 *Meeting learning needs*
- 5 *Improvement through self-evaluation*

Examples of Quality Indicators (second layer) for “Improvements in performance” , the first broad indicator, are given in three themes (= “dimensions or subareas”; JvB):

- 1 *Standards of attainment over time*
- 2 *Overall quality of learners’ achievement*
- 3 *Impact of the school improvement plan*

Then the Scottish Inspectorate gives a description of so- called “Key features”: here I quote the “key feature” for the subarea “Standard of attainment over time”:

“This indicator relates to the achievements of the school. It relates to the overall performance and improvement of learners’ progress in becoming successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contribution. It also relates to how successfully the school has taken forward its vision. The application of this quality indicator should take account of the nature of the school, its pupil population and its context. “

It will be clear that such a “key feature” is in fact a small group of “indicators” as described by me above – as an expression at the second layer – but in a rather complex and interconnected way. It is not too easy to “unravel” the indicators for each “theme” from a Scottish “performance indicator”....

These examples illustrate perfectly the terminological difficulties among SICI – inspectorates.

And then at the third layer of specification the Scots give descriptions of what could be seen/observed. They do not give a strictly formulated list of “practice descriptors” but a more tentative description of a level of quality in a more holistic way. They describe five levels of judgement. I copy a Level 5 (the “best possible”) illustration plus a small piece of a level 2 illustration (N.B. the wording is always in terms of “we in our school” because the Scottish Inspectorate strongly emphasizes that this framework has to be used by schools themselves in their self – evaluation and also by the inspectorate) :

- 3 (level 5:) *We have raised attainment and/or maintained consistently high standards of attainment for learners. Learners in our school make very good progress from their prior levels of attainment. The attainment of individuals and groups has improved over time. Our attainment trends compare well with similar schools and with national levels of attainment in, for example, national examinations. We have raised the attainment of those who are at risk of missing out.*
- 4 *Overall, our learners are successful, confident, exercise responsibility and*

contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. They are personally and socially adept and have achieved in a range of activities for personal and wider achievement including, where The priorities in our school improvement plan have had a measurable impact on improving the achievements, attainment and well-being of our learners, and the work of our school.

- 5 (level 2) : *Although school improvement planning has led to some improvements in our school, it has not been used effectively to identify or implement priorities which improve learners' attainment and improve learners' attainment and achievements. “*

The third example is from the Slovak Republic.

The Slovak Inspectorate has only three broad “areas of quality”. But each of these has a rather large number of “subareas”, as is shown in the following list. Some of these “subareas” (first layer) have the same significance or even wording as some indicators (third layer) as these are mentioned in other examples:

Area 1: The quality of teaching and learning process; with as key aspects:

- 1 *Quality of the teaching process and provision of the curriculum*
- 2 *Conditions for teaching, created by the teacher*
- 3 *Effectiveness of teaching*
- 4 *Quality of pupils' learning*
- 5 *Education standards achievement (the level of pupils' knowledge)*
- 6 *Students' results*
- 7 *Personal and social development of pupils/students*
- 8 *Support for pupils*
- 9 *School activities with significant impact on educational school performance*
- 10 *Preventive and multidisciplinary activities*

Area 2: The conditions of education:

- 1 *Teachers' qualification*
- 2 *School area facilities, conditions, school buildings*
- 3 *Material and technical equipment (including didactic tools)*

- 4 *Psycho-hygienic conditions*
- 5 *Health protection and safety in school*
- 6 *Security at school*

Area 3: Management and leadership :

- 1 *The development plan, the structure of the curriculum or school programme,*
- 2 *The main goals (aims) of education*
- 3 *Courses in the school programmes*
- 4 *Planning*
- 5 *Effectiveness of leadership*
- 6 *Control; the monitoring system*
- 7 *Information system*
- 8 *Pedagogical and school documentation*
- 9 *School legislature and adherence to the norms and regulations*
- 10 *School discipline and complaining procedures*
- 11 *Progress of achieving the targets and aims in the teaching plans and school programmes*
- 12 *The quality of the teaching process and the applied methodology*
- 13 *Professional and pedagogical guidance*
- 14 *Qualification of a school principal required for the position and further professional development or in service training of teachers.*

The Slovak and Rhineland – Palatine profiles do not give examples of “practice descriptors”.

Here are some more remarks about these examples in order to show which type of issues will rise when a deeper analysis will be done by somebody:

- It can be easily seen that in the Slovak example the “learning results” are taken into the “teaching process”; probably there is some theory behind this: that process and results belong very closely to each other. But that is not made explicit in the profile.

- In the Rhineland – Palatine example they only mention “results” in terms of “subject area competencies” but if readers can take a look into the (German language) attainment targets and curricula that are prescribed in RHP they can see that there also more general competencies in terms of objectives mentioned there and these are also taken into the work of the inspectors.
- Another remark: in the Slovak list there is no explicit mentioning of “school climate” (as in RHP) or “ethos” (as in the Scottish example) in the three areas or in the subareas. But if one takes a closer look, very probably the subareas “School activities with significant impact on educational school performance” and “School discipline and complaining procedures” and “Psycho-hygienic conditions” and “Health protection and safety in school” and “Security at school” and “Personal and social development of pupils/students” taken together, cover what is mentioned elsewhere in other inspectorates “school climate” or so.

It will become clear that this type of combining and analyzing “areas” with “subareas” (first layer) or even “indicators” (second layer) in order to see if “areas” from another inspectorate’s framework are “covered” can be done at larger scale.

The conclusion is that there seem to be many similarities in the choice of areas and subareas (domains, aspects) of quality that matter, but with significant differences in wording and grouping and with differences in priorities and combining (sub-areas) in overarching concepts. But the interesting issues are not in the similarities at these high abstract levels but in the choices that are made in the wording of the quality definitions, in the breaking down into subareas; and in the choice of practice descriptors at the real level of observations and scorings done by inspectors. And in the formulations of the criteria against which inspectors judge what they see. I strongly believe – although many profiles are not very specific and extensive about these frameworks – issues – that we can learn massively from each other if again some researchers and inspectors should do a real analysis here. There has been an earlier SICI – project in 1999 – supported financially by the European Commission – that delivered an analysis of this type of six frameworks (Ann Deketelaere: Indicators for good schools. SICI, 1999)

But we have progressed much further now of course and also the effective schools research has made progress. Not to forget the comparative projects of the OECD and some work of the European commission.

My second conclusion is that the differences are more significant in the indicators (second layer) that are highlighted in the quality areas. There seems to be very interesting differences in the wording and in accents at this level and also in the „illustrations“or „practice descriptions“that are in use in the instruments.

Of course these conclusions have to be presented as provisional because I could not do a real, deeper and complete analysis of all the frameworks.

In the ICALT – project of SICI (International Comparative analysis of Learning and Teaching⁴) these problems about inspecting learning and teaching and formulating common indicators and practice descriptors shown here have been explored for several years. The profiles show that most inspectorates undertake many observations of what is happening in classrooms, but they do not reveal how profound or specific that inspection work is. A deeper analysis of the instruments that inspectors use in scoring and judging of what they see could show which convictions about “good teaching and good learning” are behind these lists of aspects. Some inspectorates have used the research about learning and teaching rather explicitly in the development of their criteria and instruments. See for example the profile of Saxony, writing about “principles of good instruction”, but also other inspectorates have taken into account “what works” lists for “good teaching and learning” for example Helmke (German) or Meyer (German) or Walberg (USA, OECD). And of course the “tacit knowledge” of inspectors based on experience and reflection is important. Teachers recognize often this huge reservoir of knowledge. In the Irish profile it is said that teachers and heads are keen on the advice of inspectors about their daily work in classrooms: how to do, which books or objects to use, which sequence of actions for this group of children? Etc. There we touch on the “authority, the prestige” of inspectors. Are they indeed the “connoisseurs” of good learning and teaching? Initiatives of SICI in the academy, in bilateral visits and bilateral joint inspections and joint working alongside each other a couple of weeks, in workshops, etc. are important here in further exploration. That is also true for other quality areas but in particular for the “core of what schools have to do”: enabling good learning by good teaching arrangements.

So, I strongly believe that a new detailed comparative analysis of the frameworks for inspection with their quality definitions of “good schools“ at the three levels of specificity (areas, indicators, practice descriptions) should be very useful in order to improve the communication about the quality of our schools and systems. If we could succeed in some more harmonisation of the lists and of the wording the communication in SICI – circles and in Europe - and not to forget with schools – could become more precise and clear with sharper discussions about what we really find important as a consequence. And that should be a good benefit from SICI’s work. I have the feeling that at European levels the insight that some investment of money and manpower in such a project would be useful is growing again. This has nothing to do with European federalism, but only with professional exchange and growing expertise.

Such a project is not easy to do, because much material - in particular at the second and third layers – is only available in mother tongues of inspectorates. It is lot of work to gather this stuff and to have translated pieces or complete sets and then to analyze all frameworks in this way; but it can be done of course.

⁴ See more information on the SICI – website www.sici-inspectorates.org and in Grift, Wim van de (2009)

6.3. Judgements: criteria, norms, instruments.

I now have to come back to the “judgement – issue”.

Most inspectorates have some standardized set of “judgement qualifications” in terms like “excellent”, “good”, “sufficient”, “not sufficient enough”, “insufficient”. Or, for example in a four – scale: “good, more good than bad, more bad than good, and bad”. Or similar scales; see the profiles for more examples. There is rather general experience that a scale with an even number and without a qualification like “sufficient” is better, because it forces the inspectors to be more outspoken in their judgement.

But the more important question of course is in which cases an inspector judges with “good” or “more bad than good” or so; in other words: what are the norms, the criteria, the standards that count in order to value a number of observations with a certain appraisal? I wrote already about this issue in paragraph 5.

A simple example now can illustrate the issue more clearly: if for a certain “quality area” four “indicators” have been selected in the framework : how many of these four have to be judged with “good” and/or “sufficient” in order to come to an overall judgement about the “area” that says: the quality of area X is sufficient or good”? Perhaps inspectorate A says that at least two indicators have to be “good” and at least one “sufficient” for an overall “good” and inspectorate B finds that three indicators have to be good and one sufficient for the “overall good”. And perhaps some inspectorates have “key – indicators” that have to be judged as “sufficient” irrespective how “good” other indicators are.... before an overall judgement “sufficient” can be given.

And the same question counts at the third layer; how many and which “practice descriptors” from the lists in the framework have to be judged as “observed and thus present in a sufficient number of cases” in order to be allowed to appraise the indicator to which these practice descriptors belong as being “sufficient” or “good”? The norms and “calculating rules” that are in use by the inspectorates mostly are not reported in the profiles.

See for an exception the profile of Saxony that mentions the issue explicitly. Also in the Czech profile the issue is mentioned and illustrated explicitly. The Scottish description above of “levels of found quality” illustrates that also a more loosely coupled connection between “practice descriptors” and “indicators” is workable very well. I know that in most inspectorates these rules and norms are placed in the “instrument- boxes” that inspectors use. As are, in most cases, the sets of “practice descriptors” belonging to the indicators. The rules and norms also can vary over time – eventually with “anchor – values” in order to guarantee the possibility of comparisons over time.

As far as I know most inspectorates do not publish these rules openly or active; they are not on the websites for the public. But it may be clear that these norms and calculating rules are important for a good view on how inspectorates identify the most important “areas of quality” and indicators for quality.

In an analysis - project as mentioned above or in a separate project this “norm - - issue” should be considered too. It could help much in the development of a common language and understanding among inspectors working in SICI – inspectorates. Not with the purpose to come to a kind of common framework but with the aim of sharper professionalization and continuous development.

a. Quality aspects and legal prescriptions.

Within the list of quality areas (and indicators), prescriptions for schools are included. For example; if – as in almost all countries – there are certain prescriptions about the curriculum that has to be offered in a certain school type – these prescriptions (about subjects, eventually about grades, about time, about accents within a subject ...) are “translated” in the indicators. Other prescriptions, that do not fit into the areas and indicators – like for example in some countries prescriptions about the space per pupil in classrooms, or the methods and procedures that have to be followed in advertising and/or appointment teachers – may be inspected/checked, but it is possible that this is done by another inspectorate (“the inspectorate for safety in buildings” or “an inspectorate for public staff” or....). From the profiles it is not always clear how this division of responsibilities for inspections in countries is arranged. It is also possible that some of these aspects are not inspected at all, because it is seen as the responsibility of governors of the schools as such.

In the connection between “quality areas” that are taken into the framework for inspection and at the other side the prescriptions for aspects of schooling that are in laws or decrees, an interesting and important issue is hidden. In the lines above it seems as if “prescriptions” are for more simple things and can be checked rather easily by counting, detailed observation, doing some calculation and coming to a judgement... In the same way as the police rather easily can observe the speed of my car on the motorway...

This conclusion is too simple for two reasons.

The first one is that even “sharp prescriptions” mostly give some observation – and judging – problems. For example – in the Netherlands a rather hot issue in 2005 – 2009 in secondary education - : if there is a prescription that in the lower grades of secondary schooling, pupils have to be offered 1040 hours of teaching per year ... this seems to be simple, and simply to inspect/check. But immediately interpretations and questions rise: is an excursion into a museum also “teaching”? Is an open exploratory activity in a

computer – room without specific task and without monitoring by a teacher “teaching”? How many hours “teaching” do you count for a task – in biology/ecology – that students fulfil partially in the learning laboratory at school and partially at home and partially in doing some research in the woods in the environment? So, issues of “making operational” have to be solved and of course these make the application of simple norms more difficult.

The second more important reason is that in many school laws “prescriptions” of a more general character, valid for important quality areas are written down. For example, a line in a school law could be that “the schools have to take account of the large and sometimes deep differences among pupils” and “have to deal with these differences in an adequate way”. That is indeed a “prescription” and it is immediately coupled to the “quality (sub) area” “differentiation”. But does it mean that a school that is judged to be “unsatisfactory” in this quality area in fact violates the law and thus has to be punished?? Most inspectorates do not describe it in this way. And what do we think, for example, of school laws that state that the schools have to support the emotional development of the pupils in a broad way that educates young people to become “caring and social adults”?? Also a “prescription” and inspectorates touch on it in their frameworks with elements like “pedagogical climate” and “a well – balanced and broad curriculum” and other “areas” or “subareas” or indicators. But the same question about “checking” and consequences “if not satisfactory” arise.

In the concept “weak or very weak school” and the regimes that are developed by ministries or other authorities to cope with very weak schools, this connection between “violated prescriptions in laws” and “quality statements” by the inspectorate is made. In that sense, that if a school appears to be very weak in certain quality areas (mostly in the “norms” of inspectorates these are “the learning results” plus the most important subareas and/or indicators in the area “learning and teaching process” plus perhaps one or two other areas or subareas) this means that the school is closed or taken over by new management that has the task to bring rapid improvement with perhaps unorthodox measures. So, in these cases quality statements of the inspectorate have immediate consequences. And in fact these consequences are of the same significance as huge fines for violating prescriptions in laws or decrees. One could describe the connection between “checking prescriptions from laws” and “quality statements by the inspectorate” also in another way: for some important issues of quality the society has given minimal norms by way of prescriptions and accompanying sets of checks and fines; for other important issues of quality the society has shaped an inspectorate of “independent, professional connoisseurs” who have been given the task and semi – autonomous responsibility to produce quality statements about these issues. And the consequence of these statements can be – in very serious cases – (“very weak schools”) closure or so (see above) and in other cases forms of self-regulating feedback – for example because publication of the

inspectors' statements could lead to other patterns of free school choice with as a possible consequence eroding the school further and after some time to a "cold closure"... I leave this interesting connection aside. (in 6.9. more about the issue of "very weak schools")

In some of the profiles some aspects of it are touched; in other ones they are not. In most of the profiles the issue of "very weak schools" is appearing – certainly in profiles of somewhat older inspectorates of the first generation. Fear for publication of reports mostly has to do with opposition to the status given to inspector – reports as stemming from "connoisseurs" and having a kind of status as described above; and with fear for "cold consequences" and misunderstandings among parents and the public.

This whole issue certainly deserves a deeper analysis and case studies in different countries. Also because it probably will show how the issue is related with opinions in countries about the authority of the state in matters of schooling and about the relation between the state, professional school people, parents and other stakeholders. These aspects show themselves in the tensions and connections described shortly and superficially.

b. Focus on "Learning and teaching".

As may be seen in the three examples from Rhineland – Palatine, Scotland and Slovakia there is – in the frameworks - a rather strong focus on the broad quality area "Learning and teaching". Of course that does not surprise, because "creating good learning" (or other wordings) is the core business of all teaching and all schools. Learning in a broad sense! Not only about facts, insights, skills... of which their existence is to check more or less easily after a certain period of more or less intensive learning and teaching. But of course it is also about more complex learning of attitudes, complex competencies of a broad varying character. I leave aside the vast literature about this issue of defining various kinds of learning, of "products of learning processes", of the very complex patterns of connection between teaching activities of all kinds and learning activities that are hoped to emerge on the basis of that "teaching".

What inspectors have to evaluate is whether the "teaching" – in a very broad sense of that word!! – is "good". And if enough "good" learning happens in classrooms, in labs, in excursions, etc.

Of course it is possible – and all inspectorates do – to formulate a number of indicators for the "good teaching" that inspectors want to see. For example: the activities of the teachers activate and motivate the pupils to invest mental or physical energy; and are shaped in order to stimulate pupils to cooperate with each other; and are clearly structured in order to serve concept – building in line with what we know from research from the field of learning psychology. Etc. The indicators for "quality of teaching and

learning” (as far as these are visible on websites of inspectorates!! in most profiles they are not mentioned at all) show that inspectorates use the literature about “effective schools”- see above.

But it is not true that the educational sciences have brought us a set of “thumb rules” for “good teaching “ and “good and effective and efficient learning” that can be checked by inspectors in a more or less mechanical way.

One example to illustrate this: in general it is often said that traditional, classical teaching by “telling, showing” and the corresponding, fitting learning by “listening, keeping notes, memorizing, comprehension “in” the head is inferior compared with more active forms of discovery learning, learning by doing, interactive work in pairs or groups, etc. But everyone has seen “traditional” teaching sequences that are highly effective; that fascinate students, bringing them to high levels of mental learning and activity without one physical movement or spoken word or kept note; but leading to deeper comprehension or insight or – in instruction of skills - to perfect copying behaviour and gradual adaptation towards the developing styles of students. It would be stupid if an inspector should score on her record - sheets such teaching and learning as “insufficient” because it shows few “interactive elements”. At the other side: if in a school this traditional type of teaching and learning is too dominant (however well it is shaped in itself!) we know – from research and experience- that important types of learning are not served well enough. At the other side: for younger children with handicaps in their (language, ethnical, social) backgrounds it is rather well documented that “instructional teaching” – but very well shaped in a sophisticated method – is better than a too heavy accent on “discovery learning” and other more open types of teaching and learning.

So, it is all about balance, about judgements that take into account the context, the variation that is necessary. And in each situation a new “cocktail” of the set of indicators and practice descriptors from the framework with the “clinical eye” of the inspector(s), with the context of a school and a class or group has to be shaken. In the same way as “teaching” has an element of “an art” also “inspecting” has. But certainly the clinical eye of the inspectors has to be sharpened and skilled by intensive training, by exchange among colleagues, by deeper understanding of the knowledge we have and acquire about the complex patterns between teaching and learning.

Instruments.

Some inspectorates go rather far in detailing the indicators and practice descriptors that inspectors have to use in their observations and judgments. So, for example, the inspectorate of Northrhine – Westphalia has detailed lists of indicators for teaching and learning (see their website). In order to underpin the judgement about activating teaching and good classroom – management they ask the inspectors to make an estimation of

proportions of time of a teaching episode where certain modes of teaching – learning (instruction, group work, silent individual work of students, ..) are visible. Inspectors also have to take notes of the spatial order in the classroom in order to underpin the judgement about interaction, group work, variation in teaching. In the first report with an aggregation and analysis of the results of all inspectorates done in the school year 2007 – 2008 (“Qualitätsanalyse in Nordrhein – Westfalen; Impulse für die Weiterentwicklung von Schulen” – Inspection of schools in NRW, impulses for further development of schools; on the site www.schulministerium.nrw.de, only in German) many tables can be found with the detailed results of the analyses over large numbers of schools of the different school types. This is very interesting material for researchers and for policy makers and also for schools that want to use these tables for benchmarking themselves. Similar work is done in Lower Saxony, Berlin, Hesse and also for these Länder the analyses of the inspections over one or more years are published in the national “state of the art” – reports⁵. Also the Inspectorate of Zürich (www.fsb.zh.ch) works with rather detailed sets of instruments for the inspectors where this type of indicators and practice descriptors are developed.

My impression is that older inspectorates like the inspectorates of England, the Netherlands and other ones are less detailed in these lists and leave more (professional) room for the “clinical eye” and the professional judgement of their inspectors. The reverse side of that policy is of course that work on the strengthening of the inter – inspector – rating - reliability is still more important than in inspectorates where they work with detailed sets of observation – and scoring – lists.

This aspect of “inter – inspector – rating - reliability” is important. See also above in paragraph 5. In the profiles we see some facts about this work in the paragraphs about in-service – training, but not too much; see further in paragraph 9.4. I know that almost all leaders of inspectorates realize themselves that this work is a vital aspect of quality – management in their inspectorates; but the problem of course is that it takes considerable amounts of time and thus money to do it.

I suppose that in the long run this investment is vital for the perception of the work of inspectors by people from outside (teachers, politicians) as valuable, reliable, bringing added value and scientifically sound. And these four characteristics will be vital for the willingness of politicians to invest money in inspecting schools.

⁵ These reports are accessible via the website of the Coordinating Commission of the Ministers of Education of the 16 Länder of Germany www.kmk.org I do not give all the details here. See Annex I for more about the KMK etc.

c. SICI – cooperation and SICI – learning.

The still small SICI – project “International Comparison of Learning and Teaching” (ICALT; Grift, Wim van de – 2009); see also the SICI – website for further details) has explored the possibilities of exchanges about inspection work and making comparisons of the inspected learning and teaching in primary schools. One important side effect of it is of course that inspectors from various countries observe each other’s judgement of “teaching and learning”, plus the sets of indicators and practice descriptors that the participating inspectorates use. It appeared to be not too difficult to develop shared instruments and sets of descriptors etc. It also appeared to be possible to do common training and to reach common judgements among small teams of inspectors from different countries. The ICALT – project has shown that cooperation among groups of inspectors from various countries at this detailed level of joint inspections and comparison of quality is possible and very useful for the participants as a means of professionalization. And the project also delivers valid comparisons of the quality of certain aspects of schools in the participating countries – although still on a rather small scale and presented with the necessary modesty.

This certainly could become a line of SICI – work that is promising; new projects on a broader scale and for other issues could be developed. And in these projects the level of detailed sets of descriptors that are in use could also be studied and analyzed further. I believe that this would be a very valuable activity – also for a further quality – improvement of the European inspectorates.

6.4. Sampling subjects, grades, teachers in full inspection of a school.

In paragraph 5 I already wrote about the issue of how thoroughly and broadly inspectors have to know a school in order to be able to give a valid, reliable, honest judgement about its quality. One important aspect of that is of course the framework of quality areas and indicators and the instruments in use. Do they cover all aspects of quality that are estimated to be important in society in large? See 6.2. and 6.3. above.

But there is also the question of coverage of subjects, classes and grades, teachers. Here the issue of sampling pops up.

I wrote already about the fact that there is – with two or three exceptions - no inspectorate that does a broad inspection of all subjects that are taught in a school. Most inspect only mother – tongue and mathematics in primary schools – in some grades and some classes - in order to have a more or less general image. In secondary schools this is mostly not done, although sometimes inspectors who have a certain background select a few lessons to observe in the subject they know. Spain is an exception; there subject – inspection of one or two subjects is part of a full inspection of a (secondary) school. Wales gives in its

profile the division in three types of inspections: full inspections when all subjects are inspected, standard inspections when six subjects are inspected and short inspections without specific subject inspections, but directed at the general “teaching” etc. So, Wales uses the term “full” in a different context to show another significance as I have previously used the word until now; for Estyn “full” means that all subjects are inspected; this wording shows very nicely the feeling that an inspection without covering all or most subjects is not a “complete” inspection. Also in Ireland the Whole School Inspection mode contains an inspection of most subjects. But these modes of inspection are exceptions now.

Some inspectorates open the possibility for schools to select one subject or another topic of interest that is covered in the external inspection – apart from the general list of quality areas that are inspected. In Rhineland – Palatine schools themselves can select a subject that is inspected by the inspectors; in case associate inspectors with specific expertise from a university or so are contracted. Also Northern – Ireland does so; and also Hesse and Spain report about this possibility.

About grades and the number of classes per grade that have to be inspected in order to have a representative image, some inspectorates apply rules of thumb; for example the Lower Saxony Inspectorate has its rule about 50 % of classes etc – see paragraph 5. Thumb rules can also count for the proportion of teachers that have to be observed in order to form a representative image.

Nine inspectorates seem to have that type of rule, but in most profiles this is not very clear.

Certainly, at the start of the system of full inspections and the first round(s) this sampling – issue is important for the credibility of the inspectorate: “how is it possible – teachers say – that inspectors write a report about the quality of our school if they did not visit me and my work in grade X??”.

Usual thumb rules from educational research may be applied, but often conflict with real possibilities in time and workload of inspectors and of schools. Fortunately, the expertise and training of inspectors and the investment in inter – inspector - rating - reliability (see above in 6.3.) helps a lot in making the judgements acceptable for teachers and heads – as is shown by many satisfaction investigations in various countries. The profiles give some details about this: mostly more than 85 % of people recognize the judgements as real and correct. There are some – as far as I know until now - weak signs, that when inspection work happens more frequently and people become accustomed to it, it seems that more doubt about the validity of the judgements arises. But this is not very clear.

My impression is that after a first and second round and after experience of people with

school – reports that indeed give an evaluation of the school that corresponds with what most teachers think this issue of representation is less important.

Three inspectorates mention that they do not observe in classrooms: Portugal, Norway, Estonia. For Norway and Estonia this has to do with their specific inspection – arrangements (see paragraph 7).

6.5. The use of other sources than own observations.

a. Tests and examinations.

A first source – in particular when inspectors have to gather facts about the learning results of students that the school has achieved (so, the quality area mentioned “attainment, achievement, or learning results ...”), is the use of figures about tests and examinations of different kinds. 15 of 18 inspectorates use test – results that schools deliver about their students; and/or examination – results. Here the arrangements of the various countries differ considerably. In England they have developed the system of testing students in the most important subjects a number of times over their school career. In Flanders only recently an obligation for schools to use some type of testing exists and standardized central examinations at the end of secondary schooling do not exist. Most profiles give facts about these systems although not very detailed. But in OECD – sources – for example the recent project on assessment systems in countries - and on websites of ministries facts about the national systems are to be found easily.

Of course the problem to form a judgement about the learning results that are not so easily measured by tests or exams, remains. For example about more complicated cognitive skills or attitudes. There are no inspectorates that take tests or do complicated assessments for these types of “learning results”. Slovakia and the Czech Republic report that inspectors use tests that have been developed by the inspectorate for aspects where there are no national tests. German inspectorates continue to have difficulties in assessing the learning results of schools if in their Land there are not yet central examinations or other standardized instruments (a rapid development is to be seen here; at Länderlevel and at federal level many initiatives have been taken in the last few years). Lower Saxony for example refrains from giving a judgement about the learning results that a school has, because the inspectors cannot use valid standardized tests or examinations – although this is changing rapidly.

Some inspectorates have already developed data – banks, or “warehouses” with all kinds of facts and figures about schools – also about tests and examination – results. But then they combine these with facts and figures about the socio – economic backgrounds of students (weighing factors, see about the Context – Valued Assessment in use by OFSTED; see paragraph 5). A connection is being made – but still difficult! - with facts

about the success of students in further schooling – as an indicator for good results of the preceding schooling. England, Scotland, the Netherlands are ahead here, but some other inspectorates also report a rapid development in this issue of “data-banks”.

Various questions however may be asked here. For example a technical one: how does the inspectorate weigh the variation over years in examination results? But also a more pedagogic one: is not given a too heavy accent on the “hard –core“ subjects at the cost of history, music, religion, languages...? And a matter of principle also: if a school chooses to have its own clear profile with more accent for example on social behaviour than on excellent results in academic subjects (that type of profiling is wanted if politicians ask schools to use better their autonomy!), how can the inspectorate weigh the results of that work – if the inspectors can invest time and effort to assess these in a valid way - against the perhaps national attainment targets for e.g. mathematics?

One may expect that the number of that type of question will grow as the tensions between the wish for national testing etc. and the wish for more profiled and self – conscious schools grow.

Further investigating and analysis of these issues in SICI should be very useful!

A rather specific issue here is the question whether an inspectorate is able or allowed to use the results of a sample of students from a certain particular school that took part in international or national research, like in the OECD – project PISA or in national samples taken by some university for research in - for example - achievement of students in problem solving behaviour after a certain “treatment”. The profiles do not give facts here, but I know that some inspectorates have arrangements with their national agencies that do this type of research for using the data – under strict conditions for privacy etc.

b. Use of self – evaluations of schools.

A further source for inspectors could be the self – evaluation that a school delivers.

The idea that schools have to undertake a self – evaluation has been promoted strongly for 25 years or so; in policy papers of almost all countries (see the profiles) and in general literature about school development (e.g. MacBeath, Rolff and many other writers). The background of course is the conviction that schools have to be more or less autonomous; and the belief in the advantages of self – government and self – steering for the quality of the processes of development in the schools and for the quality of education in schools as such.”Schools who are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and who work consequently and consciously at improvement and further development will become the better schools”.

One consequence is that many governments have invested rather much money and energy

in national projects for stimulating schools in self – evaluation: training, manuals, guides, support by advisors, etc. In most countries now performing a self – evaluation is obliged. And in some countries (for example the Netherlands, Sweden, more) it is also obliged to publish the self – evaluation (on the school’s website). Some inspectorates have been active in this area too by publishing guides and “good practice”. Very well known is the Scottish publication “How good is our school?”; that has been published by HMIE in the first place as a guide for the processes of self – evaluation in schools; but of course it has been constructed in such a way that also external inspectors could use it for their external evaluation of the school. This is also seen in other countries: the framework of the inspectorate more and more is used as a set of “quality areas and indicators” that gives the structure for a self – evaluation.

But this development has another consequence: that an important aspect of quality is the quality of the self – evaluation of a school.

That sentence has two meanings: the quality of the self – evaluation as a process in and by the school; and the quality of the result of that process: how good is the school according to its self – evaluation? The first meaning has led to the fact that in many frameworks for quality that inspectorates use, “self – evaluation” is one issue, in most cases it is part of the “leadership and management”- aspect. The logic behind that is that it is the task of the management to initiate processes of self – evaluation and to organise the consequential processes of improvement. The profiles show that many inspectorates indeed inspect whether the school has reasonable systems for self – evaluation in place.

Nine inspectorates clearly report that they use the self – evaluations of schools only as a “source for assessing the quality of the management etc.” Namely: Flanders, Denmark, Spain, Ireland, Hesse, OFSTED, Rhineland – Palatine, Sweden, Slovakia, Estonia. These inspectorates do not use self – evaluations in a proportional way with external inspections. Estonia (see also paragraph 7 for the inspection – model of Estonia that differs strongly from most others!) uses the evaluation of the obliged self – evaluations as an indicator for “good governance” of a school and the district. (see also paragraph 8 d)

The hesitation of some inspectorates to develop more proportionality based on the quality that the self–evaluation reveals (second meaning above) has not only to do with the slow development of self – evaluation in schools, but has also a deeper reason. Namely the conviction that all dangers of “window – dressing” about the quality of a school must be avoided. Said simply: if the inspectorate reports that a school has a satisfactory quality, everybody must be able to trust that “guarantee”; parents who send their children; students who choose a school because they trust to be educated well into a certain professional or academic direction; politicians who have to take responsibility for the good use of public money and for the new generations and the development of economy and society; the public in general. This “accountability” of schools is a vital element in

the thinking behind the development of inspectorates in Europe and elsewhere.

And the judgement of the inspectorate about a school has to serve that accountability. Consequently – various countries are saying - the inspectorate has to be careful in using results of a self – evaluation of a school, if that self – evaluation and its results in terms of quality – judgements has not been checked by the independent and professional inspectorate itself; eventually by only a small sample of observations in classrooms and a small sample of talks with students and parents, etc. See further the reports of the SICI - project “Effective School Self Evaluation” (ESSE)⁶ and the profiles of in particular OFSTED, Scotland and Northern – Ireland.

The second meaning (“it appears from the valid and reliable self – evaluation of a school that the school is rather good in most aspects of quality”) has led to the concept that external inspections should be “in proportion” with this result of the self – evaluation. Not only in order to save money and work, but also in order to empower the schools: if your self – evaluation is done well and shows good quality of your school, then the inspectorate will not repeat your good work....; and will not bother you too much with disturbing external inspections.

“Proportionality” between this self – evaluation and the external inspection means that the external inspection is done with a lighter touch or only in aspects of quality that seem to be less developed (as shown by the self – evaluation). The SICI – project “Effective School Self – Evaluation” (ESSE) has explored these connections further. But from the profiles it seems that a real proportionality has not been very well developed; only in Portugal a serious experiment has been done after the ESSE – project.

Inspectorates that report elements of a proportional relation between the results of the self – evaluation of a school and their external inspection of the schools are: the Czech Republic, Northern – Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Saxony, Scotland, Wales.

What can be seen is that some inspectorates develop a “lighter touch” – inspection for those schools that in a former round of inspection (not the self – evaluation, but the external inspection!!) were rather good: IF in the preparation of the next inspection it appears that there are no signs of deterioration in for example examination – or test results; or in complaints or in rapid changes in the teaching teams, etc... THEN the inspectorate only does a shorter inspection that does not cover all aspects of quality. This is the case now in England and in Northern – Ireland; more or less also in Scotland and in the Netherlands. See for more details in paragraph 7. So, this is a kind of proportionality, but not with the results of a self –evaluation, but with the results of a preceding external inspection.

⁶ All reports about this project can be found on the SICI – website www.sici-inspectorates.org . I do not give the bibliographic details.

The development of self – evaluation in schools is slow and often only partial for a small number of aspects of quality. “Quality management” seems to be rather complex for schools, in particular for the smaller ones. This cannot be seen in the profiles but is shown in the Annual Reports of a number of inspectorates. My estimate is that in the countries where self – evaluation has been promoted already for a longer time (some 20/25 years) and where various projects and initiatives and support is shown, some 35 to 55 % of schools have reasonable forms of self – evaluation, anyhow in a number of quality – aspects. This is so – but not for all school sectors the same! - in Scotland, Northern – Ireland, the Netherlands, England and perhaps some other countries. OFSTED writes about 70 % of schools with good self – evaluation. But the Dutch profile writes about “a not very mature” situation regarding the self – evaluations. And in many other countries this percentage is not higher then 10 or 20. Sweden reports explicitly about the disappointing results of the policy to promote self - evaluations. Remarkable is the rather rapid growth of self – evaluation with the SEIS- instruments and methods (“Selbst - Evaluation in Schulen”) in a growing number of German Länder where sometimes within two or three years the proportion of schools using SEIS, grew to 40 % or more. The set “Selbst – Evaluation in Schulen” (see www.das-macht-schule.de) was developed in a broad project of the Bertelsmann – foundation with strong international components. In 2008 the project and the belonging instruments and data –base etc. were taken over by a consortium of 8 Länder – as an example of a private development transformed into state – work. It has to be seen whether this rapid development indeed leads to sustainable use of the set in the schools and whether the schools will connect the knowledge about themselves with “school development”.

This whole issue of the relation of external inspection with self – evaluation done by schools will certainly remain an important issue. Also for workshops, analyses, a broad comparative research project, SIA-academy work, and such activities in SICI.

c. Questionnaires and interviews, school files.

All use – apart from observations in classrooms or laboratories about quality areas like the teaching and learning and about the organisation, the communication and the pedagogical climate etc. – interviews with a group of teachers, with parents, with pupils; some also with the school leadership and the governors. Most inspectorates report that they use standardized interview – lists and use elaboration of questionnaires by ICT. Some use laptops with an internet – connection with the office and have access to the databases in order to be able to make immediate benchmarks or more complicated calculations. See the interesting report about questionnaires for pupils and interviews with pupils of Ludo de Lee and Ilse de Volder (Lee, Ludo de and Ilse de Volder; 2009) ⁷

⁷ The reprot is accessible on the site www.sici-inspectorates.org

Some give questionnaires to a sample of parents or teachers or students drawn by the inspectorate itself in advance; some ask the school to do that with or without strict rules.

Most inspectorates also ask schools to deliver a file a couple of weeks in advance of the inspection itself in order to enable the inspectors to do the analysis in advance and to formulate more specific questions or issues for interviews, observations, meetings. OFSTED reports in its profile explicitly that the inspectors who are going to inspect a particular school have a pre – inspection briefing with hypotheses about what might be expected and what type of issues and questions have to be investigated specifically. It is also known that other inspectorates do that – sometimes this pre- analysis is done by research – staff (the Netherlands, OFSTED, Denmark), sometimes the inspectors have to do that work. These requested files differ – according to the profiles. Some ask much documentation, for example about the examinations etc (see above), but also about socio – economic backgrounds of the pupils’ families (some like OFSTED and the Dutch inspectorate can draw these facts from national databases), and about entrance and leaving – figures of pupils over the last five years, etc. But also about the development of the school programme, the self – evaluation, the projects that are underway, etc. It is also possible that an inspectorate asks for an overview of the complaints by parents over the last five years.

The profiles contain lists of the demands on schools about this documentation in advance. It often appears from evaluation – forms about the inspection that school leaders experience this work as a rather heavy burden. But alternatively as something that has to be done anyway in their own process of school development.

Interesting is the work that Czech inspectors do in advance; they call it a “comparative text analysis”; it is a comparison of the official prescribed curricula and other prescriptions about the “school program” that schools have to draw up and to publish with the school program of that particular school that will be inspected in due course. The aim is to check in advance whether the school complies with the prescriptions and how the school uses the room for own decisions about all kinds of educational and organisational issues. One could say that also this is a kind of analysis in advance in the same way as other inspectorates report, but in the Czech Republic it is a specific underlining of the importance of this “school program” or “school project” as it is called in other countries.

In the Netherlands and in the Czech Republic and also in Denmark and Sweden schools now have – since recent years – obligations to deliver an annual report – to the public and the regional or national authorities – with all kinds of facts about results on tests and examinations, about pupils repeating a year, about numbers of truancy and measures, about special support for pupils with learning problems, about the number of meetings

with a parent council and about the issues discussed, etc., etc. If that is the case, of course the inspectorate can draw a lot of information from these sources and does not have to ask for separate paperwork from the schools. These annual reports are in fact parts of the self – evaluation of a school and also have to be seen in the tendency that schools have more autonomy but also more obligation to install “good governance”- see paragraph 8.5.

A specific issue here is the access to pupil – files with notes, tests, observations by teachers about progress and family – problems or whatever. Many inspectorates take a look at a sample of these files in order to lay a basis for their judgement about the quality of the work of the school in doing an evaluation of the individual progress of students and the analysis of this and the planning and execution of specific measure for individual help. This is broadly accepted and of course inspectors never give recognizable details in their reports.

Somewhat more sensible is the access to teacher – files. As long as it is about records of in – service – training or so there is no problem, but more sensitive of course is the access to individual evaluations of teachers done by the school leadership. Or about illness. Generally the inspectorates have a kind of conduct code that they do not ask for that type of files.

Electronic school files and traffic begin to come – between schools on line with their own record – page in the database of the inspectorate. There seems to be a fast growing system of national databases about all kinds of facts about schools: national statistics about numbers of pupils and staff, about flows in numbers, examination and test results, plus school documents delivered by the school in electronic form plus inspection reports plus ... OFSTED probably has the most extensive database, but also the Netherlands, Northern – Ireland, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Flanders report about quick development here.

d. Triangulation, other sources.

This principle says that, if possible, inspectors will generally use more than one source for their judgements. So, for example, if files about pupils show in more than a few cases that it seems that teachers do not take periodic records about the learning progress of the pupils in an orderly and systematic way (one indicator for the quality subarea “offering teaching - learning that is adapted to individual needs of students”) inspectors in general will do some extra focussed observations in classrooms and will ask a number of teachers – directly or in a meeting- about this before they give their judgement. This principle is of course important for the credibility and validity of the inspection work. It has to be applied in the general planning of an inspection of a school, but also during that inspection in an incremental way – depending on what is seen and experienced during the inspection. The profiles speak about this in general wordings but of course the details of

this are much more interesting – to be experienced in joint inspections between inspectorates from two or more countries. Perhaps this type of professionalization can also be exercised in detailed discussions in workshops and in the SICI – Academy.

There are also other sources.

So, Spain and Ireland report that they see the minutes of meetings of the team of teachers and/or the management of the school.

Almost all inspectorates have a general “walk around” in order to gather an impression of the life in the school and of course such a walk – also during the days of inspection – says something about climate, care, discipline, etc.

Portugal explicitly mentions that they judge the properties of the school – that has also to do with the remit of the Portuguese inspectorate that contains also financial management as an issue for judgement. Portuguese inspectors also have to do financial audits of the schools. Spain also sees the account – books of the school.

OFSTED reports about the procedure of the “Pre – Inspection Briefing” (PIB): the lead inspector analyses the self – evaluation of the school and all other sources that are at hand in the preparation. He/she then writes down his/her “hypothesis” about the judgements that probably will be confirmed during the inspection and asks specific attention for certain aspects that have to get focus in the inspection itself. Such an approach of course directs the triangulation.

6.6. Some other “mechanics” of full inspections.

In this paragraph I mention some results from the analysis of the profiles about aspects or characteristics of “full inspection” without much comment.

a. The frequency of Full Inspections of each school.

In the profiles we see the following figures:

- each school once in 3 years : 2 inspectorates;
- once in 4 or 5 years: 5 ;
- once in more than 5 years (up to 10) : 8

But sometimes inspectorates have complicated patterns and smart combinations with thematic inspections in samples and other types of inspections. I have learned that we have to be careful with the frequency – figures.

The Northern – Irish profile makes the issue very explicit. They have – by law - to inspect each school once in seven years in one of three modes of inspection, namely a standard full inspection; or an area or region inspection as they do; or a thematic inspection. But in practice they carefully plan ahead, so that each school is seen once in a few years – say four on average. The Dutch are developing the same type of smart planning, also leading to a frequency of once in four years. And although the Flemish colleagues have a scheme of frequency of every nine years, they try to do more or less the same. In Spain there is a system of “full inspections” with a low frequency in the Autonomous Regions, but besides that there are various other modes of inspection (see the profile) with as a consequences that most schools are seen once a year or even more frequently. Also in Portugal this is the case, also caused by the tasks of the inspectorate in doing financial accounts and other inspections (see paragraph 8.4.).

These schemes of course are expressions of the feeling of citizens and politicians and inspectors too, that effective monitoring of schools has to be connected with frequent inspection – eventually of a differentiated type. In public discussions it is often asked: “is once in three or four years adequate?” Could that not mean that children have “bad” education during one or two years without a public reporting about that by the inspectorate? Others say that schools are not changing quickly enough... and: “we must not act from an attitude of distrust but from an attitude of trust in teachers and heads who of course also want the best for all students”... And: what about the costs in terms of the number of inspectors and in terms of workload and disturbance in schools if inspections are conducted more frequently?

It seems that a frequency of three or four years is seen as reasonable in most countries. With opportunities for parents or teachers to complain and by doing so draw the attention of the inspectorate and eventually causing an unscheduled, perhaps even unannounced, inspection. From the profiles it is clear that most countries have the system that complaints of parents or students principally have to be dealt with by schools themselves; but in the case that people finally come with complaints to the inspectorate, the inspectorate always takes these seriously. So, there is always a “last possibility”. See about complaints paragraph 8.3.

The discussions in England in the last seven years or so about these issues and the changes in the schedules and frameworks of OFSTED (see the profile) are illustrative. But also in other countries these discussions are behind decisions about the frequency – sometimes they are reported in the profiles. See in paragraph 7 the connection of the “coverage” of schools by a not too low frequency of inspections on the one hand compared with the newer modes of inspection: proportional, risk – based, differentiated.

b. The number of inspectors taking part.

This is about the inspectors who really appear in the school during the so-called school phase of a full inspection; after the preparation phase (where in some inspectorates analysts or other inspectors also take part). And before the phase of reporting where often only one “author-inspector” is active.

Seven inspectorates write that it is possible for one inspector to carry out the school phase.

Ten write that at least two inspectors have to be present.

But almost all write that in most cases three or four inspectors do the full inspection – depending on the complexity and size of the school. Inspectorates deal with this issue flexibly.

c. Notice in advance.

Almost all inspectorates usually give notice in advance. The period varies from 2 (OFSTED) to 180 days (half a year scheme of work of the inspectorate of Rhineland – Palatine).

Seven inspectorates say: 2 to 4 weeks.

Ten say: 10 weeks or more.

OFSTED takes an exceptional position by giving notice – in the last few years – of only 2 days in their fourth round of inspecting schools and most schools are satisfied with this short notice.

Two of the inspectorates’ profiles give no clarity and in Denmark and Estonia giving notice in advance is not applicable, as they have quite a different view on their inspection – regime (see further paragraph 7).

A few inspectorates introduce unannounced inspections: OFSTED, the Netherlands, Ireland, Northern Ireland; but I have incidental information that now and then in other countries also unannounced inspections take place.

d. Number of days in the school.

Most profiles mention that 3 or 4 days is usual and average. Five inspectorates say that also one day is possible. The duration in general is flexible up to 12 days in large, complex schools. This issue is strongly related to the newer inspection arrangements (see paragraph 7)

6.7. Feedback for schools.

A first level of feedback is the giving of immediate feedback to teachers or other functionaries who are observed. Several profiles are not very specific and clear about this.

Seven seem to say rather boldly that inspectors are not allowed to give any feedback to teachers. Three say clearly that they do. And eight are not clear.

Sometimes there is a possibility for teachers to have a short feedback meeting at the end of the day. In these more informal situations inspectors can probably be somewhat less careful with the reluctance about “how to do and what to improve” than in their written reports... but the general line of the management of inspectorates is to be careful with advice.

Several inspectorates have installed opportunities for schools to ask for oral feedback – in a reporting session immediately after the finishing of the full inspection or somewhat later in a reporting and discussion conference.

Estyn, the inspectorate of Wales, offers all teachers who want that an opportunity at the end of the day for a short feedback – session with the inspector who was in the classroom. This seems to be highly appreciated by teachers.

It is well known that most teachers in most countries seldom have experts from outside in their working rooms because real internal visits and coaching by heads or bilateral classroom visits among teachers are still rather rare. It is also known that most teachers in fact like a feedback by a professional inspector and want to enter into longer discussions – as is shown by many evaluation forms after inspections. There are good reasons for the inspectorates to be reluctant with this need and desire of many teachers:

- The time it asks, not only immediately after the inspection, but also later when schools want to come back to issues in the report or earlier discussions with the inspectors about certain quality aspects;
- The conflicting roles that come into the relation between school/teacher and inspector. Because after a few years the inspectorate (perhaps even the same inspectors) come back in order to do a new full inspection and of course then a focus on the details that have been discussed in the feedback – session a few years ago can bring a one sided picture or even window – dressing;
- There is also the issue of competition with support agencies.

So, at the second level of feedback or advice – the level of the school as a whole - it is

understandable that most inspectorates indeed take the standpoint that the inspectorate is giving a mirror – of - evaluation to the school – confronting the situation of the school in terms of quality areas and indicators with the set of standards and norms that has been developed by the national inspectorate. Secondly, the inspectorate gives an analysis leading to (elements of) a diagnosis of the situation. The treatment – to keep speaking in medical terms – has to remain the responsibility of the school itself and of the supporting agencies. Hesse for example explicitly reports that no feedback is given at school level. The reason is also clear: the response of the school is the responsibility of that school itself in agreement with the Schulaufsicht (the “Zielvereinbarung”; see 6.9.). But the profile of Hesse also reports that this does not have enough impact, that “schools do too few with the inspection – report” and that a discussion is started about a deeper involvement of the inspectors in the follow – up.

In many discussions and books and evaluation reports about inspection work it is said that in fact it is a pity that the professional knowledge of the inspectors who have a good insight in the school, is not used more extensively. The issue is directly connected with the impact of inspection work (see also paragraph 6.9.): does a school inspection with its report really lead to improvement of the quality of schools?

In the profile of Spain it is said explicitly that in the daily practice inspectors give advice to teachers about various issues concerning school life and daily work; and this is also done towards head teachers.

It seems that after the first experiences with inspection of schools in the nineties and the first years of the 21st century, the reluctance is changing. In particular in England members of parliament and other leaders have said, that it is unfortunate that all the knowledge that inspectors have gathered over the years about “what works well’ and about “good practices in schools” is not shared with all schools. This very true statement has led in some cases to a series of publications of inspectorates about “good practice’ in all kinds of themes and topics. See in particular the profiles and websites of the inspectorates of England, Scotland, and Northern – Ireland. Such “good practice” or “examples of excellence” can also be found in some Annual Reports or thematic reports; also in the Netherlands, France and Berlin.

In the profiles of Scotland and England we see that stronger working relations between inspectorates and consulting and helping teams or departments of local authorities are established more formally and directed on improvement plans of a group of schools.

Some inspectorates - like the Scottish HMIE, Estyn in Wales, Ireland, OFSTED – write or at least suggest that they are less reluctant with this type of feedback and advice than they used to be. I have the impression from the profiles and from contacts that more and more other inspectorates also do more advising than they used to, but a little bit hidden in

informal arrangements and without talking too much about it. Some inspectorates talk about a “professional dialogue” with schools – instead of “giving advice”. The idea behind and significance of that wording is that inspectors indeed have to be very careful not to prescribe a specific solution but being quite open with schools that inspectors are ready to discuss with them examples of effective approaches that have been seen elsewhere, inviting to consider and evaluate these and to follow these ideas up if they wish; perhaps going to talk to the schools concerned – and mentioned publicly by the inspectors!

At this second level of feedback/advice – the school level - the oral feedback immediately after the school phase “at the end of the last day” is given by almost all inspectorates. Most do that in a not too big meeting with some representatives of the teachers, the board of governors and the school management. Sometimes also some parents are invited. All profiles make clear that this is done in order to give a first feedback with the most important judgements about the quality areas or even at the level of quality indicators. This of course is expected by the school that wants to know “how we are judged” – after a few days that can be full of tension. But all inspectorates also warn that this is a sensitive issue, because it is easily possible to come up with important discrepancies between what will be written in more formal language in the report that comes a few weeks or so later at one side and the things that are said or perhaps only heard in the closing meeting... Chairing such a feedback – meeting asks much of the social and technical skills of the inspectors.

In Rhineland – Palatine the report is presented to the school in a conference, which is moderated by the AQS inspector. I quote from the profile in order to show how delicate the balance between responsibilities is guarded: “The conference does not only exist of the presentation of the results to all members of the school community, but the more important part of it is a group-work phase, where the members of the school community discuss certain topics of the report and come to conclusions about the school’s strengths and the areas in need of further action. These results are presented to the conference by each group. With this procedure the AQS wants to support the comprehension of the report and wants to ensure that the report and results are used in a constructive way. The results of the conference are not yet the targets, which will be agreed upon in the target agreements (= “Zielvereinbarung”; see paragraph 6.9.) with the school supervisory board (= Schulaufsicht) , but the conference and the results of the group work are the starting point for a debate about what the targets of the next school development period should be. The target agreement and the inspection of the taken measures to meet these targets are incumbent on the school supervisory board and the school; the AQS is not involved in this process and also does not give any recommendations.”

Scotland reports about a “professional meeting” between the inspectors and the school some time after the inspection; this is the same idea. Also in Slovakia this is done.

I have the impression that such a conference is a good bridge between inspectors' work and the school's work.

6.8. Reports.

A report is given to the school with the impressions and judgements of the inspectors. Here we see big differences among inspectorates. All inspectorates give a written report to the school. But "school" can vary; for example: the report is only given to the head or the management and/or the governors. Or it is arranged – by law – that the management has to publish it for the teachers and the parents and for all who want to have it – also journalists of local newspapers for example. Or it is prescribed that the report will be published open on the website of the inspectorate; 14 inspectorates do that, 3 not (the German members of SICI). Remarkable is the fact that in Germany (also in other inspectorates than these three SICI - members) and also in Switzerland and Austria the public availability of school reports still is such an issue. In most other countries there has also been some resistance in schools and teacher unions to public availability, but in most cases this was rather brief – a few years. Some profiles mention this but in most inspectorates this issue is over. I think that also in German countries it is a non – issue; it is a matter of a few years before German parents and other people will grasp their rights. The resistance in teacher unions is strategically stupid too because it only widens the gap with society in general, as has been seen in all other countries.

There is a clear tendency in almost all countries to move into the direction of more openness.

Almost all inspectorates send the report to the school as a draft – report. The time gap between finishing the inspection and sending the draft varies considerably – from 5 till 45 working days. In almost all inspectorates schools have a right to give comment – in most cases it is arranged that they are allowed to give comment about "the facts" that the inspectorate reports, not about the judgements about the quality areas or indicators. But of course in practice the separation here is thin... Ireland writes about a formal procedure for schools for delivering objections and for dealing with these, but more inspectorates have similar arrangements.

The length per school report varies from 10 to 80 pages. But the length does not say much as I know from incidental comparisons between English, German, Dutch, Scottish, Northern – Irish, and Swiss school reports. Long reports may be less clear in their descriptions and judgements than shorter ones. So more important than the length is the content. Anglo – Saxon inspectorates have invested a lot in policies for "writing plain English" in order to avoid the tendency that often exist in this type of situations namely to hide unpleasant or sharp judgements in "woolly" language.

The formula in OFSTED's profile "reporting without fear or favour" clearly expresses what is the heart of the matter in reports about schools and also – perhaps more – in general reports (Annual Reports, Thematic Reports, Joint Area Reports).

For this whole issue a real investigation and analysis of course is not easy, but could be very useful and interesting. Of course the problem is that these school reports are in the national languages, which makes it difficult to do some comparative research.

Do the reports give a clear statement about the school's quality? 14 inspectorates say "yes".

All say that the reports give a list of strengths and weaknesses of the school. And some say that they describe examples of good practice seen in the school (as a kind of positive feedback and also as a signal to other schools).

In their reports about schools most inspectorates say that they also give some analysis of what they have seen and judged in the schools that have been inspected. Of course the report about a school gives a description of the situation (in rather short and general terms, with references to other sources that are known to the school) and a judgement. That judgement in fact is a comparison of what has been seen with the norms for "a good school" that have been formulated. See in 6.2. and 6.3. The analysis tries to go a level deeper: what is the cause of problems that have been formulated? For example: problems in a lack of coordination between teachers and their work in grades? Or a lack in competence of teachers to deal with differences among students in learning abilities? Or shortcomings in the learning materials and other "hardware" that is necessary in a good school? Or....In this type of analysis various "aspects of quality" are connected or can be connected. Very often – as we know from the research about school development – there are problems in the leadership and management behind other problems. At this level of "analysis" there are also rather big differences among inspectorates. But in the profiles this becomes not very visible.

The differences in the school - reports from various inspectorates in the level of detail in their descriptions of their judgements seem to be important; and about the level of preciseness about observations and the eventual consequence for recognizing teachers in the descriptions. Also this does not become very clear from the profiles.

Most inspectorates show that they realize themselves that the judgement about a school has to be proportional with the context of that school: a school in a difficult socio – economic area has more problems in obtaining good results than a school in a well-to-do area. But how a context-related judgement has to be given, is not always easy, because it depends on what the inspectorate knows about the context. See in paragraph 5. And also how the context is weighed in the judgement; because in several countries there is also a

standpoint that says that whatever is the context it is important to know about the raw scores of a school. This whole issue is not very profoundly discussed in the profiles, so it is not possible for me to analyze it.

The Spanish profile explicitly writes that they give clear recommendations to the school about what to do and how to act. See paragraph 6. 9 about “after an inspection” for a further discussion about this.

All inspectorates say that they do not give judgements about persons working in the school but about the general aspects of quality; so about “the learning and teaching” and not about individual teachers. And about “the leadership and management”, not about the person who is head of the school. (but of course sometimes this principle is difficult to realize, in particular in reports about smaller schools). See paragraph 5 and in 8.5.

In this comparative study the whole issue about school – reports is a difficult issue in the profiles. Important things remain unclear. And of course I only have impressions of these issues in (a few number!) reports in languages that I can read. An analysis of an international sample of reports has not been done - as far as I know. But I strongly believe that a mixed group of inspectors and researchers covering a number of languages – (families) with each other, could do this and certainly should find a number of very interesting similarities and differences. Such a study has to go a level deeper than we could do in the profiles. A new SICI – project in cooperation with some universities (with EU – money?) could be very helpful in order to deliver “good practice” to inspectorates.

6.9. After a school – inspection??

a. Action – plans, pressure, “Zielvereinbarung”.

In fact all inspectorates have – in their mission statements or in the legal formulation of their tasks – some hint to “improvement of schools or improvement of the education in the country”. (For something more about this important issue of the “mission” or “focus” of inspectorates, see paragraph 6.10).

The question of course is how this can be achieved at school level. The core task, “full inspection”, as described earlier may very well be summarized with “description, judging and – more or less - diagnosis” (see also 6.7). In itself it is not “care” or “help” or “improvement”.

The core idea is that a school - under its own responsibility and authority – picks up the report of the inspectors – and the feedback to individual teachers and the feedback in the final meeting at the end of the inspection – and uses the report as a source in the own process of school development. And some research shows that a number of schools

indeed use the report in this intended way. (Ehren, Matthews and Sammons,a.o.)⁸. But the old idea of the eighties and nineties about an autonomous school that should pick up the report that in itself should be so powerful that it will bring the school to its own analysis and the drawing up of a good plan for improvement activities and eventually hiring some support, ... that idea has been left. Only a minority of schools seem to be so strong and independent that they are able to act in this way and some research (Ehren) shows that in fact only those schools that are already very good and have already a regular cycle of “Plan – Do – Act - Check” (Deming) can accommodate an inspection report in this hoped way. The majority of schools need stronger stimuli and/or some “push” or pressure to come into action after an inspection report.

In fact all inspectorates say now that at least it is strongly expected from schools that they give an adequate response – as it is often formulated. Some inspectorates report that schools are obliged by law to give such a response within a certain not too long period. This response must guarantee that minimally the school takes the report seriously. But in many profiles it is unclear whether some authority – that could be the inspectorate itself but not necessarily - assesses this response of the school or not. In several profiles it is even not clear at all if there is an authority that receives the response in written form or otherwise. And – next step – if there is some more or less strict agreement between the school and that authority on what to improve and how and when. For weak or very weak schools most inspectorates now have such a regime and in most cases the inspectorate itself then is the “authority” that forces the response and checks it and does the monitoring of progress.

So, in the majority of countries now there is an obligation or at least a strong expectation that schools deliver a kind of response to the report of the inspection – within a couple of weeks or two or three months or so. In Scotland, Ireland, Northern –Ireland, Wales, England, this response (a plan for development and improvement, officially to be sent to the authorities by the board of governors of the school) has to be delivered to the Local Education Authority – the regional school authority. This is also the case in the Czech Republic, in Spain, in Portugal, in Estonia and in most German Länder – countries where such a regional authority exists. In some countries where such a regional authority does not exist – the Netherlands, Flanders – schools are not obliged to deliver a response to the ministry or the inspectorate, but very often the board of the school and the parent – council ask for it. And more and more schools publish the plan on their website. In some German Länder – and in some UK LEA’s – the authority and the school agree about such a plan and then the Schulaufsicht or the LEA – officials check regularly whether the school is “at scheme” in bringing improvement or not. Also in Sweden and Norway a system that schools have to agree with authorities about such an approach, is emerging.

⁸ More literature about impact research on inspections of schools in Annex III in paragraph 14.

And in all these countries also the arrangements about “support” for schools are located in the regional authority. And the whole system of “agreed plans for actions of improvement” plus the check of the progress plus the support can be inspected by the national inspectorate. As is done in England, Wales, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Northern – Ireland. See further about “area inspections” in paragraph 8.1.d.

It is important to note that this type of “Zielvereinbarung” (as the Germans call the agreement; literally translated: “agreement about the goals and aims of further development and improvement”) in some German Länder like Northrhine – Westphalia (see Homeier, 2008) , Lower Saxony, Rhineland – Palatine, Hesse, Berlin, and Bavaria is made with and for all schools – also schools that have been judged as very good. So, this is done not only for the weak or very weak schools.

The profiles are not very outspoken about this issue, which is a pity. Because this type of “obliged” improvement scheme with much freedom for the school itself to select the issues and goals for improvement – if only something is done! – is a method to keep some pressure on schools and to keep the results of the external inspection in mind. For example: it is not always clear in the profiles whether schools have to make an agreement with the inspectorate itself or with another agency such as the LEA or Schulaufsicht; although of course this is an important question. Another issue is that from the profiles is not 100 % clear whether in Anglo-Saxon countries (England, Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales) and in the Czech Republic, Sweden and Portugal, that also write about these arrangements, schools are indeed obliged to deliver such a draft – agreement etc. or that only “soft pressure” is given under the formula “you are expected to ...”.

An issue that has no or little attention in the profiles – and neither in most of the literature about school improvement – is the “sustainability of the pressure” on a school to keep pace in the improvement and in the “booking of results”. To have a good “plan of action” agreed in some kind of Zielvereinbarung is of course very good, but in many schools the pressure of “everyday business and everyday problems” often means that the stimulus for focused actions that has been given after the inspection, is extinguishing after a rather short while. Some local authorities in the UK and also in Germany (Schulaufsicht) have introduced – for this reason – regular visits with talks and small focused own “inspections” about the progress in the execution of the improvement activities. That is an important possibility because it keeps the improvement schemes of schools in that authority “alive” in a good mixture of support and pressure. Inspectorates that cannot work in such a context of work “after an inspection” must realize that the “one shot stimulus” of an inspection report very probably will bring some rapid effect for the short term but that for only a few schools – with very strong and excellent leaders who manage for the long run – a more sustainable improvement is possible. In these circumstances it is not a bad idea to have an arrangement in the inspectorate to keep some pressure on the schools by visiting each school once a year or so for only half a day or so in order to

“keep an eye on the progress”. Examples are: the Netherlands, Northern – Ireland, Spain.

b. Weak or very weak schools.

Eleven inspectorates describe or mention their regimes for these schools. These are all somewhat more experienced inspectorates; inspectorates that start their systems of full inspection of all schools often wait a while before they design what exactly their procedures are for “very weak schools”. There the whole issue of “weak schools” is still under discussion. Also older inspectorates still have political discussions because politicians often want faster and harder regimes..... And in some countries inspectorates or governments have greater difficulties with the authorities of non – state schools about the responsibility issue.

When a school appears to be “weak” or “very weak” (the terminology for this differs here among inspectorates) in many countries the regulation of the follow – up is stricter than the procedures that I described above. Stricter regimes for example in England, the Netherlands, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Spain, Slovakia, Northern – Ireland oblige the board of a school to deliver a plan – to the inspectorate – with measures how the situation will be improved rather quickly; this plan is evaluated by the inspectors. And rather soon follow – up inspections are done.

In Flanders a result of an inspection can be that a school receives a conditional permission for continued functioning in the recognized and subsidized system; under the condition that certain aspects of quality are improved within a shorter or longer period. This seems to be an effective “threat” or pressure, because until now the ultimo ratio of not – subsidizing a school has not been applied in Flanders.

Also Sweden reports about new developments into the direction of more toughness and strictness in the inspections and the follow – up, eventually also with sanctions.

It is felt to be important that a school with serious quality problems is “pressed” to take quick measures and to seek help in order to prevent that the school is “falling deeper”. The profiles of OFSTED, the Netherlands and Slovakia write rather explicitly about a type of “intervention ladder” with measures (help, follow – up inspections, fines – Slovakia) that tries to prevent the school to weaken further.

In most countries the proportion of really very weak schools seems to be some 1 % or so and Ministers have to do something then. Often Chief Inspectors remind ministers and the public of the 200 or so children or pupils per school who do not have the education they deserve....Although in fact the advice of the inspectorate here is about one particular school, the more general advice is about what can be done in such cases and whose responsibilities are affected and must be changed.

That is the reason that various “younger” inspectorates still hesitate to formulate clear policies in this issue. Probably that is good, because the pressure on inspectorates and officials to do something is heavier in the situation where there is a clear case. Too early advice about how to cope with very weak schools leads to too general discussions about closing schools and about problems between national and regional or denominational competencies etc.

The general issue for discussion here is the relation of the powers of regional or national authorities to act with individual schools at one side with at the other side the dominant policy of giving more autonomy to individual schools. Autonomy however accompanied by regulations about delivering school programs, self –evaluation, etc. The autonomy means that we now have school heads with more powers, and also governors or boards with more powers and responsibilities. But also: obligations for annual reporting, obligations for self – evaluation, etc. (good governance). The balance here is defined differently in various countries. See earlier paragraphs.

From the beginning of full inspections in England in 1992 the measures for schools with quality problems have been rather strong and with limited time for schools to take action – but also with many discussions and big protests. In most countries schools get a strong warning that within a couple of months a clear plan for improvement must have been developed and must be in action. And a second issue is that in most countries the judgement “you are a very weak school” is given only after a period of two or three years with preceding inspections with provisional judgements and an announcement that the inspectorates gives time for action and improvement before a more definitive judgement is published.

It is becoming more and more clear that the intention must not be to “close” a very weak school, but to help the school to improve itself as soon as possible. At the other side the sense of urgency is also becoming stronger in many countries; it cannot be accepted that children or students do not receive the good teaching that they deserve for longer than a very short period... In most profiles – also the profiles of the “newer inspectorates” - something can be found about this issue, but not in detail. In coming years the development here will be very interesting.

Case studies – in connection with the research and theory about school improvement in general – of very weak schools and of their improvement could be very helpful and illuminating. About issues such as: their preceding history; the analysis of when and how the first signs of deterioration could have been seen and if an inspection should have been undertaken; the procedures of repeated inspections and warnings; the shock effects on the team of being judged as very weak; the effects of publication of the judgement; the analysis of deeper causes for the problems and the first measures to be taken; the analysis of the progress;.. There are some fascinating reports about very quick and nevertheless

not superficial and permanent improvement schemes in very weak schools (in England, the Netherlands, Germany) and I suppose that we could learn much of these processes for the general improvement of schools in the system as a whole.

In some serious cases (“very weak”) schools can be taken over by the government or even closed. The profiles give interesting facts, but of course at a rather general level. Cases are probably very interesting, because for all cases a tailor – made arrangement is necessary. Ireland forms a commission with leading inspectors and high – ranking civil servants per school in danger; this has also to do with the fact that the large majority of all schools are Catholic schools with their own board. Often the board is part of the problem ... and that of course requires a careful approach with respect for their own identity and responsibility. The Flemish profile also touches this issue.

German and other newer inspectorates hesitate with this type of arrangements. When people are more accustomed to the idea that indeed schools differ and that schools may be not good enough, the stricter regime with very weak schools is accepted and often politicians and parents ask for quicker and “harder” measures of the board or the authorities.

In all profiles the issue is described. Of course this issue remains important for SICI – workshops etc.

An important issue is the “definition”. It is interesting to see that several profiles (OFSTED, the Netherlands, Scotland, Slovakia) report that the percentage of really very weak schools is rather low; something like 1 % or so (the figures vary a little bit). “Very weak” is – in most inspectorates – a school only if the learning results of students have been under the level that might be expected (with a view on the context of the school) during three years; and if also one or two other major quality areas (for example the teaching) have been evaluated as unsatisfactory. It is known from personal contacts that in more countries governments and the public often find this a too mild threshold...

c. Link with the theory about school improvement.

I think that a more specific investigation about this “after the inspection” is important and very interesting. Perhaps to be done by some external researchers, because the whole issue is vital for modern thinking about school development and support for that.

Most effective for creating “ownership” and “responsibility” in schools after an inspection with a report seems to be the arrangement that the school is obliged to deliver a draft for the agreement and the attached “plan for action” within a certain period (six weeks, three months,...) and then the officials (LEA, Schulaufsicht,...) check whether the draft is an adequate response; that is to say: “does it cover the most important issues in the inspection report? does it contain a do-able scheme for investment of time – energy –

money? does it build on strong points of the school? Etc. “

Interesting is that in Portugal a school that received a good inspection report is given more autonomy (in which issues exactly is not clear from the profile). At the same time all schools must present – after the inspection – a plan of activities like in many other countries.

Behind this “testing the adequacy of the school’s response” and not prescribing one or more specific actions to be taken, lies – apart from the general ideas about school autonomy - a more fundamental one: if a school has – in the judgement of the inspectors – some quality aspect that is not too good, it is almost always possible to mention – after deeper analysis of the possible causes - more than one possible action that could bring improvement. The causal binding between situation and action is – in most cases – not that strong, that it is justified to “order” (with a strong advice by the inspectors or local authorities) one specific “thing to do”. What may be asked of a school is a serious consideration of the analysis of the inspectorate and a serious response in terms of actions. But there is always room for varying responses.

And it could even be justified that a school accepts that in a certain quality area the situation is not ideal, but that in that specific situation of that particular school it is better to leave that situation as it is, but to take action in another quality – aspect. These decisions are for the school. What may be asked is a serious weighing of the judgements of the inspectors and a serious response.

Some German Länder and UK LEA’s have possibilities for schools to ask for some support – with a small budget – in this phase of planning. And in many countries where schemes for strengthening school – autonomy have been introduced in the last 20 years or so, it is also possible that schools make a contract with one or two supporting agencies for support in the realisation of some of the plans for improvement. More and more countries have shaped or are shaping their school - financing – systems in a way that gives the schools own budgets for buying this type of support: guidance, coaching of the school leadership, in – service – training of a group of teachers, introduction of a new series of textbooks for a subject that seems to be rather weak,... or whatever.

Here we touch on the more general research and literature about the most effective ways of helping schools to innovate and to improve (Fullan, Rolff, Hargreaves, McBeath, Lagerwey, and many other authors). One important lesson is that the government and the institutions have to create a sophisticated mixture of “pull” and “push”: of support that can be accepted or not, of pressure to obey certain rules, of measures to strengthen the national curriculum or the national examinations or tests (pressure), of money and support that is offered if the school – deciding in freedom! – will take part in a national project.

The design of these “configurations” of all kinds of generic and specific measures and of national or regional projects and of “innovation schemes” for schools in certain specific areas or circumstances; the general in – service – training facilities and possibilities; the specific legal work in curriculum, examinations, testing, obligations for publication of results by schools, etc. etc. is a complicated work of fine tuning – fitting in national traditions and circumstances. I have to refer to the general literature about system-wide school innovation and – implementation; see the authors mentioned earlier and many others. The results of external inspections of schools can function in such a configuration of measures and initiatives and projects as a basis that is seen – by all parties – as impartial, professional, and independent and that gives a common ground for analysis and action. I cannot go deeper into this general piece of theory of school development.

I am convinced that these arrangements “after the inspection” are vital for enhancing the impact of the inspections. Too few schools are so independent and self – governing and vital that they are able to draw up their own plan of improvement after an inspection and to carry out these actions without support and also attention and pressure from outside. Even in Scotland where – in my knowledge – the longest period of stimulating this self – governing of the innovation by schools themselves exists, too few schools do what is hoped that they should do. More pressure from outside and also more support has been organised in the last few years (for this see the Scottish profile).

In a few countries we see a more specific development: schools can ask for a specific inspection in a certain area of quality or development. Sometimes this is a standard procedure – e.g. in North – Rhine – Westphalia, and in some Swiss Kantons – and in these cases it is more a realisation of the idea that the inspectorate is not able to inspect all areas of quality and development deeply enough and that it is good that the school has the possibility to get a deeper inspection and judgement and analysis from the inspectorate in one certain area that the school wants to be assessed by an external professional partner. But there are also a few inspectorates where in a second or third round the schools can ask for a focus of almost the total inspection: in such a case the inspection is no longer about the whole set of aspects of quality and the associated indicators but “only” about one or two aspects where the school itself has said that they could be stimulated by an external inspection and judgement of a more profound and specific character. In Hesse in particular but also in Northern – Ireland we see elements of this idea.

But also in these two varieties it remains so that it is not the inspectorate that helps and advises the school in the design of an improvement and development plan, and certainly not in the realisation of such a plan.

So, the principle in all inspectorates remains: the inspectors inspect, that is: they observe, analyze and give a judgement about the quality. And other partners of the school have to

give a deeper analysis – if wanted - and to help the school in its improvement and further development.

6.10. The mission of inspectorates: improvement?

I touched on this question already a few times: is it indeed true that the mission of modern inspectorates is to improve the schools and thus the education in a country? And as a consequence: if after a couple of years of working with systems of full inspection of schools there is no or few general improvement, does that mean that full inspection is a bad idea and that the money invested in it, could be better used for other measures – for example for extra manpower in schools or other measures? As in several countries opponents of inspections have said: “the pig is not growing fat by weighing it but by feeding it...”

Indeed it is clear in the profiles that this is an important issue.

Eight inspectorates write (more or less clearly): our primary focus is on school improvement. These are: Spain, Ireland, Hesse, Northern – Ireland, Rhineland – Palatine, Saxony, Slovakia, and Wales.

Hesse gives a nice formula in its profile that can stand for several other ones: “This (the inspection system) is to give an impulse for lasting, sustainable, and effective school quality development”.

Four others also state that the improvement aim is in their mission, but they write less absolutely: the Czech Republic (but not with a very absolute statement); that same type of statement we find in the profiles of the Netherlands, Scotland and Sweden.

Eight inspectorates write: our primary focus is on “general accountability”: Flanders, Denmark, Estonia, OFSTED, Portugal; this is also said by four others but also with some lines in the mission statement for improvement: the Czech republic, Scotland, Sweden, the Netherlands. Ireland and Wales write that they have both perspectives.

So, there is no clear division.

This is a well – known discussion in many countries and in general studies about the design of inspection systems. But the profiles make clear also that it is difficult to be very sharp in this choice. That has to do with the basics of full inspection.

The descriptions above of what in fact is done in a full inspection show that in all systems the focus of a full inspection primarily is on three elements:

- a. “describing” of the real quality that is seen by the inspectors after a professional, valid and reliable process of gathering knowledge and insight;

- b. “confronting” this described quality with the set of indicators and norms that reflect the desired quality; this leads to the evaluation of the school in the inspection report;
- c. “diagnosis” of the situation by isolating a number of issues, sometimes causes, that according to the inspectors lie behind problems – with – quality or excellence – elements and that could be starting points for further analysis and action.

So far one could say that the full inspection is an activity of a “technical” character (with of course enough ideological and philosophical aspects that have been packed into the framework and into the codes of conduct of inspectors plus their interpretation schemes and rules for calculation etc!). The question is what is done with this three – layer - result?

If an inspectorate keeps a strict accountability mission – standpoint, the inspectorate publishes the threefold result and leaves it to the school and its stakeholders in a broad sense to act. The same counts for a three-layer - result that is laid down in a system report about the state of the education in the country. Strictly speaking, this standpoint implies, that inspectors do not give any feedback to teachers with evaluative remarks, do not give any advice to teachers about how to improve their work, or do not give any feedback or advice to the school leadership or to support agencies or to ministers. I refer to the paragraphs 6.7. and 6.9. above for further details.

However three remarks must be made immediately:

- This strict accountability – mission – standpoint does not mean that there is no room for conferences and talks with teachers or school leaders after an inspection! As long as these are directed on giving explanation and illustration of what has been seen (the description) or how it has been evaluated (the evaluation) or what the inspectors think about deeper analysis and causes (diagnosis) this is only helpful for a better understanding and acceptance of what the result is of the full inspection. And of course that understanding and acceptance are very important starting points for a project of improvement – action that has a chance to be successful. See the “after – inspection – conference” of the Rhineland – Palatine inspectorate and the “professional meeting” of the Scottish HMIE. This same “explanation and illustration”- work can be done and is done by some inspectorates at the level of system reports: TV – interviews, sessions with parliament and many other groups where leading inspectors give explanations and where there is room for questions about interpretation and backgrounds.
- The boundary between this line of “explanation and illustration” and the line of “discussion and giving opinions about what to do now and how to do that” of

course is thin. That is exactly the reason that many are hesitating to go too far with the line of “explanation and illustration”. See the careful formulation of Rhineland – Palatine about what inspections do in the post - inspection conference.

- The “three – layer – result” is given with the intention that the stakeholders (the school, the board of governors, the authorities, the government, the journalists, the parents, the students,...), read it, debate it, use it, take the action that seems to be adequate,... Short: indeed they are going to be accountable and to take their responsibility. And this intention to enable people to take their responsibility of course means also that it is the responsibility of the inspectorate to be as clear and helpful as possible in designing the “three–layer–result” and in doing everything that is helpful in order to have it “landed”. One example of this type of ideas about “better landing” that I have heard in a discussion a few years ago:”could it be a good idea to put short versions of school reports in libraries in the town” - in order to stimulate public discussion?

And it is understandable that for many potential receivers and users this all – in particular the third remark - means that they in fact say: “tell us what you inspectors with all their knowledge and experience think that are the best actions to take now and do not be so reluctant with advice and ideas and proposals for action”. “We know very well that we are responsible and that we have to decide, so we are not afraid of your proposals and ideas, because we are self – confident enough to decide – perhaps in contradiction to your ideas”. These types of reactions have been heard in some of the reactions and hearings of the English parliament in the late nineties about changes in the inspection regimes of OFSTED; and also in Scotland and the Netherlands.

Some inspectorates included in their profile that they chose an improvement mission –as seen in the elements that are also mentioned in my three remarks above. So, in fact the difference with “accountability“- mission – foci is not sharp.

And indeed: most of the mission statements about this are not 100 % sharp... Often also in formal mission statements that focus on “accountability” something like “at the end of the day our work is about improvement of education in our country and in our schools” is said. The profiles have made me clearer again that it is almost impossible to be very sharp in the separation between the improvement focus and the accountability focus. Because indeed: at the end of the day all inspection activities and their “three–layer–results” are for the better wellbeing of children and students and parents and teachers.

But not in a direct way: inspectorates cannot take over schools, or the role and tasks of authorities and support agencies. More elaborated and analytical thinking about mission statements and the philosophy behind inspection work could be a good thing.

It is also clear – as is confirmed in various profiles; see also paragraph 6.9. above - that this whole discussion cannot be uncoupled from the whole national arrangement of pressure, accountability, support agencies and structures, rules about examinations, etc. So, the national context is vital. Therefore it is very good that the profiles give – in a nutshell, but rather clear as far as I can estimate – the key elements of this context.

That does not mean that nothing can be said about a strengthening of the “improvement effects” of the “three-layer result” of an inspection. For the school, but also at system level. I mention some elements that – in a number of cases - have been touched in various paragraphs and that also can guide a more precise and detailed analysis of the profiles and of case studies and of work in SICI – workshops and projects.

Without any pretension to be complete – only to illustrate my opinion that more is possible here without crossing the boundary and setting in train a process towards transforming an inspectorate into a support agency.....:

- a. The idea to make a sharper separation in the reports between the descriptive parts and the evaluative and analytical parts; giving a clear list with an evaluation per indicator or group of quality – indicators (what most inspectorates do) is a good thing, but more can be done.
- b. The feedback – time slot for all teachers who want that (Wales) in a “private setting” at the end of a day or in a break can be very helpful in giving more stimulus and informal advice without mixing up too much with the “three – layer-result” basics.
- c. The idea of Rhineland – Palatine to organize an explanation – and interpretation and discussion session between stakeholders and inspectors after the finishing of the report, can help too in starting the improvement and action – episode shortly after the inspection, using the knowledge and involvement of the inspectors and without possibility to influence the report. Of course it remains important that inspectors apply a well-balanced reluctance in not going too far with advice and too boldly given opinions about what “has to be done”.
- d. The German “Zielvereinbarung” (also found elsewhere, but as far as I can see in less strict and powerful forms) after the inspection between school, authority and support agency is a powerful instrument for setting pressure on the improvement – process and a form of monitoring and support that are closely intertwined .
- e. More stimulating results of inspections could be published in terms of “good practice” from inspected schools. In the form of “school reports” that are based on inspection reports about a school but extended with more detailed descriptions of important issues – for example about the history of improvement and

development projects in that school. Many examples of this type of “school portraits” are at hand, also for example from the SICI – project about the use of ICT in schools. But also booklets or DVDs with short descriptions of good practice with variations from various schools are helpful. And regional conferences with school –presentations and room for discussion and exchange. Etc. In the literature about school improvement many good examples can be found and can be applied for use by inspectorates. OFSTED recently has published various good examples in this line (for example with excellent schools or about good leadership in schools), but also other inspectorates did so. The school portraits that have been published in the last four years in Germany - of the schools that won the prizes of the Robert Bosch Stiftung for the best school of Germany – are also very good examples (Fauser, Schratz and Prenzel, ed).

- f. I have mentioned already the possibility to offer a school (not being a weak or very weak school!) to come back for a one – day inspection of one or two quality – areas or subareas, that have already been inspected in the usual inspection and where the school wants to have a feedback “during the process of improvement” in the form of an in between – evaluation with somewhat stronger advisory elements. In that case it is advisable that the usual inspection is done later by other inspectors in order to avoid the effect of evaluating the effect of your own advice. For some inspectorates this idea will go too far...

It is not too difficult to think about more ideas here and in some profiles these can be found.

I am convinced that the whole issue about the impact of inspections will become still more important than it is now. It is difficult to investigate the impact in a so complicated context of policy, more or less autonomous schools, authorities at more than one level, a free market of ideas and support, and the whole national arrangement for “quality assurance” and “quality improvement” that has to be taken into account... (see also paragraph 9.5.)

7. Modifications of the mode “periodic full inspection of all schools”: proportionality, risk – based inspection.

a. Proportionality with the self – evaluation.

In paragraph 3 I already wrote a few lines about these newer modifications: “If a “full inspection” of a school is done for the third or fourth time, it might be expected that in many domains of quality not too much has changed. Is it necessary to do a full inspection again? Or is it enough to do that only in some weaker domains? Or only in domains where risks are seen, based on the results of self – evaluations or on complaints or other signals? And: if a school delivers a very well executed (complete coverage of all

important domains of quality, with external judgements, reliable) self – evaluation, is it then necessary to do a complete external inspection? In the profiles these issues are discussed and reported and we have to come back to them”.

In paragraph 6.5 (“The use of other sources then own observations”) the inspectorates are listed that use the outcomes of self – evaluations of schools (if: well - done, reliable, covering all important areas of quality sufficiently) in a proportional way with a more restricted and shorter external inspection. Inspectorates that do so are those of the Czech Republic, Northern – Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Saxony, Scotland and Wales. These inspectorates describe in their profiles how they arrange their inspections of a school in proportion with the quality of the school as this quality is shown by the self – evaluation. Interesting is the two – tier model of Northern – Ireland. And certainly also the three types of inspection that Estyn in Wales uses: full, standard, short (see the profile for more details). Certainly in the description of Estyn it is clear that also “estimated risk” – elements play their role. Scottish inspections start with a presentation by the management of the school of their self – evaluations (one hour or somewhat more) which give inspectors immediately a flavour of the thoroughness and quality of that work.

b. Self – evaluations as an indicator for good management.

We saw that there is another group of inspectorates that also evaluates the self – evaluations of a school (Coverage of all important quality areas? Reliable? Stable? Based on participation of all stakeholders in and around the school? And other indicators for a “good self –evaluation; see the ESSE – project of SICI with its publications on the site) but uses them as an indicator for the good management of the school: if the management succeeds in providing for a good self – evaluation with clear outcomes and with clearly formulated consequences for improvement activities, this is an indicator for good quality of that management – irrespective of the outcomes of the self – evaluation. These are the inspectorates of Flanders, Spain, Ireland, Hesse, OFSTED, Rhineland – Palatine, Sweden, Slovakia, Estonia. (With remarks for some of them, because all arrangements differ a little bit; see the profiles).

The first group has so-called proportional modes of full inspection. In the already mentioned ESSE – project this line of development has been explored and in the profiles it is often mentioned – also by inspectorates that are still in their first round – that they will probably explore this mode further. That of course has to do with the grounds already mentioned: respect for the autonomy of the school and for the work of the school – people in delivering a self –evaluation; saving time and energy in the inspectorate; being able to keep a frequency of “inspecting a school” of 3 to 4 years.

c. Risk – based modes of inspection.

There are several inspectorates that have developed rather clearly other modes of inspection, the so-called risk-based mode. The Dutch inspectorate is the most outspoken.

See the profile of the Netherlands Inspectorate. The core is that each year of each school (in primary and secondary) a risk – analysis is made by the department “Knowledge” (as they call it). Here databases with a growing mass of information about schools are stored. On the basis of facts about test – and/or examination results of pupils, combined with context - facts a first categorisation is made: the school has learning results that are in line with what might be expected from a school in these circumstances. Also registered signals of problems (complaints, alarming articles in the press, sudden changes in numbers of students or teachers,) are taken into account. That first result of the risk – determination is sent to the regional and sectorised (school -type) teams of inspectors. They confront the risk – determination with what they know about the school - based on general contacts and on prior inspections - and confirm the risk – determination or not. If there is no risk: a so – called basic inspection – arrangement is set for the school: we trust the quality and there will be no further inspection. This decision is published. In 2009 some 90 % of schools got such an arrangement (figures from the annual Report of April 2010).

If there seems to be a risk of deteriorating or unacceptable quality, contact with the school is made (telephone, E-mail) in order to ask extra information; and/or quite soon a short, focused inspection by a short visit (half a day, one day) is carried out. If indeed risks are confirmed a customized inspection arrangement is established with a scheme for inspections in the coming period and obligations to improve matters in a certain period. The system rests strongly upon a good ICT structure and accessibility of all information for inspectors and other staff. The principle is: as long as there are no signals of problems with the quality, the inspectorate trusts the schools and will not undertake a full inspection. The Dutch speak about “earned trust”: as long as there seems not to be a risk for deteriorating quality, the school deserves not be bothered by a form of inspection.

There has been much discussion about this, even in the Dutch parliament. It is important to see that the mode of risk-based inspections is complemented by other modes:

- The system of thematic inspections for a number of themes and topics. In such inspections a sample of say 200 schools are inspected for that theme, but of course the inspectors also get impressions about the quality in general; and it could happen that from such a thematic inspection a risk for the quality in general is detected and in such a case the inspectorate can decide to start the process of quick further risk – detection and an eventual full inspection rather quickly.
- An annual sample of schools from all school types, that is inspected in the mode

of extensive full inspection with all indicators because representative information from such a representative sample is needed in order to lay the basis for the annual report about the state of education. In this sample a specific function in the necessary research about the reliability of the risk-based system is also fulfilled: it is checked whether the risk-detection for each school in the sample that has been done in advance indeed is confirmed by the findings from the full inspection. So, principally “false positives” (schools that did not show risk in the primary detection but nevertheless show quality problems when inspected in the sample for the annual report) could be found. It is too early to have results from this check. There is another intended effect of these two samples (thematic, annual report), namely that inspectors also inspect schools that are “normal” and not only schools that are at risk. Only working in schools at risk perhaps could bring skewed ideas about possible quality in schools...

- A number of unannounced inspections, spread over the country and the school types and irrespective of the estimated quality of a school in the risk – analysis in advance.

Nevertheless – although it is said that in this way almost all schools will be “seen” once in 4 or 5 years - parliament has obliged the inspectorate to visit each school once in four years; either in the risk-based-mode, or in one of the samples or in a visit to the board of governors with a discussion – based on all kinds of information of the schools and from the databases of the inspectorate - about the state of the art in each school of the board. This system started in 2009 and the inspectorate will repeat these meetings in the future every four years – irrespective of other inspections of schools that have taken place in that period.

In this way the inspectorate fulfils its guarantee – function (“there is no school below standards without being kept under supervision by us”), stimulates the own responsibility of schools and boards of governors (“good governance”), and is able to report at system level about the quality and about shifts in that quality.

In Denmark the system is totally different.

In fact no full inspections are done but a high trust is given to the local authority and the schools. There is an absolute belief in decentralised responsibility and there is only a safety net in case the national facts about learning results in a school or about complaints or incidents show risk. There is only a small unit (Skolestyrelsen) in the Ministry with 11 staff.

For the schools in the public sector – governed by the local municipalities- these central inspectors never inspect these schools – which are the great majority (some two thirds of the total number of Folkeskole). Only: if the quality reports about examinations and other

facts (see the profile) show signs that a certain school does not meet the (national) standards required, the unit contacts the municipality. It is then up to the municipality to react and possibly meet with the school leadership and/or visit the school. See the Danish profile for interesting details about the checks and stimuli that the Skolestyrelsen provides for the “good governance” (see paragraph 8.5.) of the municipalities.

For the non-public schools in the private sector (but subsidized; see the Danish profile) the staff of the Skolestyrelsen inspects these schools if there are signals that quality problems or risks are there. See the descriptions in the Danish profiles for further details. In fact only 4 inspectors do this inspecting on site. For both sectors (public and not-public) other aspects (e.g. finances) are monitored by a completely different part of the Ministry.

Apart from this rather thin “inspection line” the ministry has a large number of “subject consultants” who work closely together with teachers of specific subjects both through courses and through individual support in order to ensure that the teachers have access to as much qualified assistance as possible in order to ensure the quality of their education. This is done for both sectors.

Although one could say that the Danish model is a risk-based model of inspection, it is clear that the basis is not only “earned trust” (see the Dutch expression) but lies also – and I think in a stronger way - in the strong separation of responsibilities for the public and non-public schools and in the strong belief in local responsibilities.

In Estonia, the inspection model of full inspections of all schools has been abolished a few years ago. The reason was that it did not give the expected results. I quote: “The full-inspecting was carried out for years, but despite the visits of the inspectors and their suggestions, the schools did not show any positive developments. Therefore the government decided to give more freedom and decision-making rights to schools.”

Now there are only inspections of schools in the sense of “checks of compliance with the laws and regulations”, and there are thematic inspections about certain quality issues that nationally draw interest. In the full inspection model the inspectors also had tasks in advising the schools a little bit (see paragraph 6.9.), but this combination of inspecting and advising did not work well. Now the advisory function has been installed in the offices of the regional governors and authorities.

I already made an earlier remark concerning Estonia; as far as I know it is the only country where after a couple of years of full inspections they have left that arrangement and do only thematic inspections and checking compliance in defined aspects of quality. In Zurich, a people’s decision did the same some 8 years ago, but three years ago they again introduced the mode of full inspection. So, Estonia is a very interesting case. But it goes too far to dwell on the details and backgrounds – as far as these are clear from the

profile. One could not say that it is now a kind of risk-based inspection.

Norway takes a similar clear position as Estonia: it is the responsibility of the national inspectorate to check whether all stakeholders obey the laws and regulations. Annually a number of topics and themes are selected for inspection in a sample of schools and regions; this is done by the 13 inspectors of the national unit. These inspections are for the greater part carried out by the 43 inspectors of the regional offices of the regional governors in cooperation with the 13 inspectors of the national group in the Ministry. If they want, or if the regional authorities ask, the regional inspectors can also carry out other type of inspections in the schools in the region; also “full inspections” or inspections coupled with projects of improvement.

The Czech Republic is interesting because – like Norway and Estonia – there is also an accent on “checking compliance with the law and regulations”. There is a sharp difference between a “state check” of a school and an “inspection for quality”. See the profile for details. The core is that in the “state check” a number of laws or regulations are checked and the “inspection” is about the quality of the education in the school. Also in Portugal this type of separation seems to exist although the profile is not as clear about this issue as in the Czech Republic. The Swedish profile also makes this separation between “regular inspections about following the laws and regulations” and “quality inspections”. As already written in paragraph 6.3. (“quality aspects and legal prescriptions”) most inspectorates take these legal aspects into their frameworks and do not make this sharp separation.

Flexible, risk-based inspections can be found in some cities of some Autonomous Regions in Spain, but they are more based on the general expectation of risk; based on interpretation of national facts about income, immigrant – situation, social – economic analyses. The focus is still on national checks of compliance with national (federal) laws and regulations. For a better understanding of the rather complex Spanish inspection situation I have to refer to the profile and the documentation mentioned there. Also the Portuguese Inspectorate IGE has a risk – based inspection mode in that sense that all schools in areas where the nature of the population is such that the risk for very low learning results are high, are inspected more frequently.

In Flanders (and in a few other countries starting also in an explorative way: Scotland, Wales, Hesse) we find a smart combination of proportional aspects and risk – based elements. The Flemish arrangement – new since the summer of 2009 – is not the same as the Dutch risk – based mode, because it has a short inspection of one day at the start of the process for all schools. In that short inspection the focus for the following inspection - after two or three weeks - is decided on the basis of a provisional analysis of strengths and weaknesses. So, different from in the Netherlands, not only schools with risks are inspected; also good schools are stimulated by an inspection – that is the thinking behind

the model. But of course it also has a strong risk – based component, because in the initial inspection the main risks may be detected and these will of course lead to the shorter or longer (the proportional aspect!) audit, the later inspection. One could say that there is a differentiated coverage of all schools with “full inspection” in a proportional way plus a rather frequent analysis whether risks are there. In the Flemish profile a very interesting list of indicators and elements that play a role is to be found plus a list of examples of choices that are made after the initial inspection - for indicators that will have the focus in the following inspection.

In Hesse, Scotland and Wales some similar elements of this combination also may be found (see the profiles for further details). Such a two-stage inspection process effectively moves away from trying to predict in advance how “risky” a school is (as the Netherlands is doing, based on results, signals and previous inspection findings) and tailoring the inspection accordingly.

The new model is based on giving every school a fairly short “core” (the term stems from Wales) inspection, relying to some extent on sometimes quite mature self- evaluation systems in schools, with deeper “audit trail” testing of some aspects of the school’s quality and improvement work. The model then allows for total disengagement from the best schools, where the core inspection has been very positive, although of course that also has some problems... In Flanders the very good schools are also visited with some inspection – trail. Such risk – based systems of inspection are not known in other countries. Some elements of a risk – based approach exist also in OFSTED and in Northern – Ireland; see the profiles for details.

The profiles show – in a few cases, see also the inspectorates mentioned above – that inspectorates are discussing elements of such a risk-based inspection system, but are hesitating. And the reason for that hesitation is clear: most inspectorates want to keep a system that inspects all schools with the same set of quality aspects and indicators – eventually a proportional inspection. Such a system guarantees comparability and keeps a “live” presence of inspectors in all schools. But at the other side inspectorates see the growing problems of workload and diminishing frequency and depth, which is not good either. So, we see here an important problem of strategy for the coming years.

d. Conclusion

These newer models show that the principle that lies behind the whole idea of inspection of all schools: “to guarantee to society that all schools deliver enough quality; and to stimulate all schools to develop themselves by giving them a periodic external evaluation” is also to be realised in other modes than only with the routine full inspections, that are done by all inspectorates in their early phases.

The newer models also are able to deliver Annual Reports at system level with reliable,

representative images and conclusions. And they also keep all schools under periodic monitoring. Of course the discussion if the Dutch or Flemish or Northern Irish model is “strict enough”, will continue.

8. Other tasks of Inspectorates of Education.

8.1. Reporting at system level: Annual Report, Thematic inspections, Area inspections.

For the majority of inspectorates in SICI their core task is to deliver a professional and independent evaluation about the state of education in each individual school and in the school system as a whole. Of course this evaluative information at system level is a combination of the thorough and reliable and valid knowledge that inspectorates are supposed to have about all schools and about the system as a whole at one side; and the assessment of that information against criteria and norms at the other side.

a. Standards for the judgements about the educational system at national level?

The composition and origin of the judgement about the state of one particular school is clear: it rests upon the (full) inspection of the school where all necessary information is gathered – eventually partially based on a self – evaluation by the school as in some inspectorates and/or based on an analysis of risks. And that information is confronted with a set of criteria and norms about “what may be expected from a school in general and this school with its specific circumstances in particular (context – related assessment)”. These expectations are laid down in a framework for inspection and/or other documents; in all countries more or less strictly based on laws on education and other official documents. So, the inspectorate does not give a subjective, “private” judgement about schools but has to “translate” the expectations of the society as formulated by the government (in laws, national attainment targets, “Bildungsstandards”, examination rules, etc.) – into their criteria and norms. See further paragraph 6.2. and 6.3.

When the inspectorate has to offer an evaluation of the educational system as a whole similar activities have to be executed: gathering all necessary information and confronting that information (the “picture”) with a set of standards, norms, criteria.

At system level that is not too easy. In particular the setting of standards against which the inspectorate can give evaluative statements is not easy. Two examples to illustrate this: ‘The state of our system in aspect X (say for example the level of attainment in moral growth of children) is satisfactory’ Or: “the level of expertise in academic learning skills that students show when entering universities is weak”.

The basis for this type of evaluative statements is not the “feeling of the stakeholders in the system as such” - exactly the same when we speak about the difference of an external school inspection with a (internal) self – evaluation of a school, where a school has the absolute right to choose its own priorities and belonging criteria. The basis for the judgement of the inspectorate is “public and official”. As for schools also at system level the judgement principally has to be accepted by all stakeholders, authorities, schools and associations, because the judgement of the inspectorate has to be experienced as impartial, independent, professional, representing the standards of society as a whole,... This “has to be accepted” at school level can take various forms as I have discussed in paragraph 6.9.: an obligation to respond with some action – plan; an obligation to respond with some agreement with the regional authorities; an obligation – or perhaps strong expectation - to respond with action and to share these plans with the representatives of parents. So, there is a lot of freedom for the school to select priorities and pace of action; but rejection of the framework of the inspectorate or ignoring the judgement about the school is not accepted. Of course there are interpretation problems in the framework (see paragraph 6.2.) and in the judgement of the inspectors (see 6.3. and 6. 8).

This type of interpretation problems is even more difficult when inspectorates have to report about “the state of education” at system level.

Where are the criteria for a line in an Annual Report of an inspectorate saying: “our system of education is in good shape”?

In fact the basic thinking of most inspectorates is that if the large majority of schools are being assessed as “satisfactory” or better, the system is ok. And of course in general this is so and it is very important. But many of the criteria for assessment of schools are only “internal”: they cover the functioning of the teaching, and the coordination in the school, and the management of the school etc. These are important things. But at system level there are also other criteria. For example:

- Whether students transferring from primary to secondary schools are well prepared for a more abstract and self – governed learning;
- Whether the alignment of curricula for some subjects between junior secondary and senior secondary is good (see the problems in the mathematics investigations in PISA) ;
- Whether students from an intermediate level vocational school are prepared well for entering the social aspects of a job in a harbour or a hotel or a factory or a bank;
- Whether the system as a whole delivers enough higher educated young people in order to keep the institutions of society running;

- Whether the system is effective enough in compensating the handicaps in learning of pupils from immigrant families or other socially or cultural or economic weak groups;
- Whether the subsystem of university-preparing schools (grammar schools, gymnasia, or..) is efficient enough and brings enough “added value” taking into account that most of the students there stem from privileged families;
- Or.... (it is not too difficult to formulate more examples of these uneasy issues)

b. Annual Reports.

Most of the inspectorates publish an Annual Report about “the state of education in the system”. Mostly once a year; Scotland does so once in three years and Flanders focuses each year on a sample of different topics in a cycle of three years and publishes a full report once in these years. Here the thinking is that there is not so much change in one year. If the report mainly is reporting about the summarizing and analysis of the inspections of schools, this is certainly true.

More and more the inspectorates see the publication of the Annual Report as a major event and as an opportunity to present the inspectorate in the public arena as a deliverer of reliable, overall evaluative information. Press- conferences, TV –interviews are rather common. In some countries the inspectorate is absolutely independent in its decisions about the content of the report (England, The Netherlands, Scotland); although one never knows exactly about informal contacts between a Senior Chief Inspector and a Minister or high civil servant about the wording of some messages and about accents etc. Some profiles report about debates in parliament about the report – in some countries in two phases: first between the Senior Chief Inspector and Parliament and later between Minister and Parliament.

It is not visible from the profiles how inspectorates work with the problems of defining “standards” or “norms” at system level (see above) and how in reactions and discussions stakeholders react. So, it is impossible to give more analysis about this important issue.

c. Thematic inspections.

Many inspectorates also report in their Annual Reports about so – called thematic inspections. In such an inspection one issue – or theme or subject – is inspected in a sample of schools and then more profoundly. Fourteen inspectorates do that type of inspections at system level. Many profiles give lists of examples. Each year some different themes can be inspected in this way and in the Annual Report some specific chapters report about these themes – apart from the summarizing part about the school inspections. Most inspectorates also report about these thematic inspections separately.

The profiles indicate that for these thematic inspections mostly a broad procedure of consultation with teachers and experts is undertaken; for reasons of validity and acceptability – which is of course very understandable. But the frameworks for the thematic inspections as such are not described in the profiles.

Inspection frameworks for themes or issues and the reports must be a goldmine of treasures of “indicators” and “practice descriptions” and facts about what is happening in European schools. Perhaps a platform of translations of frameworks and of summaries of national thematic reports on the SICI – site could be developed? In fact many other relevant themes could also be inspected at a European scale in the same way as is has done in the ICALT – project.

d. Area reports.

A few also report about the state of education in a certain area or district (Northern – Ireland, the Czech Republic) and UK inspectorates also report about the functioning of local authorities which are inspected. That is an important element because it is felt that the “local authority” or Schulaufsicht or... is responsible for the follow – up after school inspections and thus has to be inspected whether they function as supposed. In Germany this is still unthinkable, but in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern – Ireland this is usual since a few years. Also in Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Norway this line is visible because the authority to govern schools and to do everything that is necessary for improvement belongs to the local or regional authorities. See the profiles with all kinds of specific national issues here. See also paragraph 8.5. about “good governance” and paragraph 6.9. about “after an inspection?”.

e. Annual Reports as bearers of all evaluative information at system level.

If such thematic or area inspections are merged with the summaries and analyses about school inspections in the Annual Report, that report becomes more content – loaded and politically more interesting. And in several countries information from research – projects about some aspects of quality in a sample of schools are taken in the Annual Report about the “State of Education”. This third source for the report – apart from the sometimes thousands of school – inspections and a number of thematic and/or area inspections - can give the results of educational research that sometimes is undertaken under contract with the inspectorate but in most cases is “free research” of universities or contract research between the authorities and universities or institutes. In some countries, there are also specific national institutes for educational research (INRP in France, NFER in England). Inspectorates sometimes influence the programming of this research.

It will be clear that if use is made of research, evidence is richer and if the thematic inspections form a substantial part of the inspection work, the content of the annual report can be richer and can cover more important aspects of the quality of the national

educational system. Broader research can also cover the aspects that have to do with more general functions of the system and with “in – between” aspects between school – types (see the examples above).

The profiles also make it clear that the inspectorates of the second generation have begun to produce Annual Reports and to gather experience with the specific problems of: assembling information from various sources, finding a good balance between “picture” and “evaluation”, writing a readable and usable (also for busy politicians...) report, shaping working policies of presenting and promoting the report, etc.

Shifts in quality.

“Older” inspectorates are able to report about shifts in quality in schools. By comparing over a couple of years the proportion of schools that was assessed “satisfying or better” in for example the indicator “the teaching is well structured” or “the coordination between teachers of one subject is good”. Or whatever important indicator... And of course it is interesting for associations and for authorities and politicians to know if investments in in-service-training or improvement of materials or teacher-training or programmes for self-evaluation etc. have had some impact (with the well-known warning that stating causal relations between actions and effects in this type of research is very tricky!).

Some inspectorates do this (Berlin, OFSTED, the Netherlands) but there is no general picture how frequently this happens. Estyn in Wales mentions that the judgements about the indicators judged in school – inspections are uploaded towards the national database that is also used for compiling the Annual Report. Estyn also mentions that these average scores (context – valued) can be used by schools as a benchmark for their self – evaluation. Of course this is also possible in other countries if only the average scores per indicator are published.

f. Annual Reports as a rich source of evidence.

Everybody who has seen some Annual Reports from some inspectorates from various parts of Europe (with all the language problems and problems of understanding contexts well!) knows that these reports contain much important information about the state of the systems. In some publications of Eurydice this is acknowledged by using some reports of this type. But in general this source is still badly used by researchers or politicians or civil servants preparing policy.

An important and helpful initiative is that more inspectorates have started to publish a summary of their Annual Reports in English.

The conclusion may be that potentially the reporting function of the inspectorates at system-level can be important in the country. But the profiles do not give enough

information about this issue for a deeper analysis of what happens and what is the effect in the countries.

Certainly it should be very good to give more attention – in SICI work but also more broadly – to these annual reports and even to try to set up a project for the comparative analysis of these many national reports at European level.

8.2. Advice at system level.

Most inspectorates clearly follow the line that “reporting” is their core business – also at system level – and that drawing consequences and delving advice from the facts and analyses that are reported in Annual Reports, is the responsibility of politicians and other people bearing responsibility. Few inspectorates openly write in the profiles that they give direct and concrete advice to ministers and officials based on these reports and the evidence that is stored there. The inspectorates in Scotland, Wales and Northern – Ireland seem to be rather direct in giving advice to their ministers – also by taking a closing paragraph with consequences and advice in thematic reports.

Many other inspectorates are somewhat more reluctant here. But many more Chief–Inspectors seem to take part in senior–civil–servant meetings within the Ministry of Education and with the Minister and of course in these settings a more informal way of giving advice and of influencing policy–making is available. Of course, in this sensitive issue much depends upon the political and governmental and administrative context in a country; and also of the personal capacities and relations between key players at the tops of ministries, inspectorates and associations. Also for this important issue, the profiles cannot give too many details. Of course this too is a very interesting issue for research and analysis: how do Chief Inspectors guarantee that all their knowledge and collected experience (from a hundred or many more inspectors who daily are in schools and judge with a professional eye) is brought into these deliberations; and at the same time keep their independence?

Because this seems to be generally accepted: inspectorates must not make themselves responsible for the improvement – actions that follow an inspection report. Neither at school level (where this is the own responsibility of the schools – governors, board, director and whoever), nor at system level.

One of the “arts and tricks” of the writing of these system reports (annual or thematic) is that the facts, the conclusions and the analyses are so clear and convincing that the action that could be and perhaps should be taken, is immediately clear and no one can hide behind formal disputes. Some inspectorates take more freedom for entering into the public debate – by lectures, articles, TV – interviews with the Chief Inspector, or whatever action. Also on this issue the profiles remain rather limited.... Probably – as far as I know the practice of some countries – much depends of the personal competencies of

Chief Inspectors and of their relationships with ministers and high-ranking officials. If this personal “standing” is ok, then there are no disputes about “the right or duty to give formal advice”. If there are formal disputes about these rights and duties to give advice, that is already a bad sign of too little influence....

The other side is that it is difficult to show whether these more informal ways of giving advice and of exerting influence have some impact on public policy making or not. The profiles do not report about visibility and the impact of advice of inspectorates at system level. And in the modern political arena, visibility is important; also for keeping status and money. I have learned that it is rather difficult to give an estimation of the impact of the advisory work of the inspectorate at system level; deep and broad knowledge of and insight in the mechanics of the system and of the partially invisible “paths of power” is necessary for such an estimation and it is almost impossible for one person to gather that knowledge and insight without living and working a longer period in one educational system.

A specific issue is the question when the inspectorate gives advice about how to cope with weak or very weak schools (schools that are becoming visible in the course of the running of systems of full inspection). The profiles show that most somewhat “older” inspectorates have clear special regimes for “(very) weak schools”. Always in close cooperation between the inspectorate, the ministry and the other officials. Here a clear domain for advice is identified, because the inspectorate is “first in the line”. See further in paragraph 6.9.b.

The Flemish profile gives a rather long list of specific advisory tasks of the inspectorate in matters of policy or management, for example about certificates for teachers. Also the Irish profile gives detail about advisory work for the inspectorate towards the Ministry and the Minister.

8.3. Dealing with complaints.

Dealing with complaints, in almost all countries, is no longer a task for inspectors.. Schools have now been given their own authority here, sometimes with prescriptions for a certain type of complaint – commissions inside and/or outside the school. And with the possibility for people to go to national or regional complaint commissions or to the ombudsman or courts.

Inspectorates in some cases have to check whether these regulations function and are obeyed.

Also it is possible that inspectors use the list of complaints as a source for their “information – gathering” work, because such a list can give signals about certain quality issues.

But the headline is: inspectors do not deal with complaints about teachers or managers.

Most (12 of 18) inspectorates clearly say that it is no real task (because the school itself is in charge) but nevertheless inspectors accept complaints and try to solve these in more or less informal contacts with the people involved and also use them as signals for aspects of quality. As a kind of “silent service” (the term is of Denis Lawton, 2003). It is not clear from most of the profiles how often this happens and how it is done, although mostly it is said that the inspectors try to forward the complaint to the persons in charge or try to solve the problem informally. From personal contacts I have the impression that in several inspectorates this “silent service” is much more often active than it is officially said...

Four or five inspectorates deal with complaints as an official task: the Czech Republic, Sweden (1400 complaints per year...), Spain, Slovakia (576 complaints last year...). OFSTED also has many tasks and responsibilities in dealing with complaints of parents, students, and teachers. These can be brought forward in advance of an inspection or during that inspection but also in between two inspections. But also in England the headline is that the school itself has to have good complaint – procedures. Portugal has an ombudsperson – function within the inspectorate with a national address/telephone/E-mail. The Ombudsperson can try to solve the complaint directly with the school or ask the regional inspectorate service to investigate the situation and to report or solve.

The Irish Inspectorate can officially be charged - by the Ministry – with investigations into complaint – dossiers where the complainant felt that the complaint was not dealt with satisfactorily by the local level. So, the inspectorate serves as a “court of appeal”.

The Dutch facility for dealing with complaints about sexual abuse and violence where in guaranteed confidence via a national telephone number 24/24 hours inspectors can be approached is a very good solution and seems to work very well.

8.4. Management of schools or other elements in the system.

Traditionally in the 18th and 19th century (most inspectorate – like agencies in Europe originated in the last decades of the 18th or first decades of the 19th century) and also still in the 20th century inspectors had many governing, managerial and administrative tasks. The history of inspectorates is a very interesting topic. It shows that the original tasks concentrated on taking care that schools were established – by feudal counts or town – councils or whoever... - “for the common people”. National inspectors travelled around and tried to convince regional or local authorities to do what was decided at national level. They also had an eye on the quality of teachers. In these days inspectors often gave courses, advised teachers, established initial training schools for teachers, wrote textbooks for teachers and pupils, etc. See for example Lawton about the English inspectors, Dodde about the Dutch, Caplat about the French, Coolahan about the Irish

inspectorate.

In the 19th century the profession of teaching developed quickly and the task of inspectors evolved into the direction of management of schools in the system: advising regional authorities in matters of appointment of staff, giving permissions for building and budget things, taking examinations of student – teachers or students of gymnasia, etc. Also management tasks at system level were fulfilled: designing curricula, organising and offering in – service – training courses for teachers or heads, designing examinations, designing a list of permitted equipment for laboratories in secondary schools, etc. But it is very clear from the profiles and other literature that the movement in most countries now is away from that. These governing and administrative tasks have to be taken over by schools themselves (deregulation, more own autonomy) and/or by local or regional boards and by information–technology–based control and monitoring mechanisms driven by national agencies or ministries. All the profiles give details about this movement.

In some countries – for example the Netherlands, Sweden, Flanders, German countries – the autonomy- for- schools- movement was the prior one and by consequence the tasks of the inspectorate had to change. In the Netherlands this meant that in the nineteen seventies and eighties the inspectorate gradually developed more evaluative tasks at system level with thematic inspections – from which later (ca. 1995) the step towards “full inspection” was not too strange. In other countries (Sweden!) the inspectorate was abolished as a consequence of the deregulation: “we no longer need inspectors because we trust the school heads and the governors and parents...” In German Länder but also in Switzerland and Austria the position of the “Schulaufsicht” or similar groups was very strong. The wish – gradually growing in the late nineties – to have some institution that could deliver independent, external evaluations of all schools clashed with the necessity to reform the old Schulaufsicht – structures and the usual resistance of people in their positions. But in fact rather quickly – between 1999 and now – in almost all German Länder and German – speaking Swiss kantons modern inspectorates came up; sometimes separated from the Schulaufsicht, sometimes as a separate department within one organisational structure. See the Annex 1 about this.

The management of schools as such is more and more a task for heads of schools, regional authorities and/or regional governor – structures. Traditionally this rather strong position of heads of schools has been there in Anglo-Saxon countries and also in the Netherlands and Flanders. But inspectors had to agree with decisions about – e.g. - opening new posts; or about renovation of classrooms or about other building issues. And also about time schedules etc. In these issues deregulation has transferred many competencies to heads and governors. In fact in most profiles it is clear that this type of managerial tasks is no longer fulfilled by inspectors. With exceptions in France, Spain and Portugal. In Portugal and Spain this has also to do with the different position of heads, who are elected by the school – team (plus representatives of parents and students)

for a certain period.

In the secondary sector inspectors sometimes have specific tasks in monitoring the central examinations and the school – bound examinations; but also this task is no longer “management of the examinations” but monitoring and inspection of quality.

In countries like Wales, the Netherlands, Flanders, England, the Czech Republic, Ireland, the inspectorate has a task in the admission and subsidizing procedures for newly established non – state- schools. In particular the inspectorate has to advise the government about the question if the intended curriculum and organisation and pedagogy of the school will be “on standard”. That is part of the general responsibility of the state; to guarantee that all children fulfil their learning - obligation in an environment that guarantees human rights and minimal quality.

Some profiles contain very interesting facts about important managerial tasks of inspectors – for example the Czech Republic and Spain; that illustrates very well the specific elements of the system – contexts in these countries. For example in Spain inspectors have to assess teachers when they want to acquire a specific certificate as ICT – specialist. And also when they want to be certified as “able to be appointed” as head of a school. But there are many more interesting details in some profiles.

8.5. Sensitive issues.

In this paragraph I want to mention a few other tasks that are or have been in discussion and are carried out in some inspectorates.

a. Inspection of “the good use of the money”

The money received by a school from the authorities of course is for the fulfilment of its tasks. Of course this issue is strongly connected with the financial systems in the countries and for example with the systems of book – keeping and checks by ministries or accountants. Where more lump sum – like financing systems have been introduced – as has been done in many countries - the room for own decisions for schools became larger.

In general the accountants (of the ministry or of another agency) have to check whether the money has been spent in an orderly way and whether all expenses are recorded and are transparent. But the other side is whether the money has been spent for the “good things”. So, are there enough teachers for the special challenges of the school? Eventually at the cost of maintenance of the building... ? Or at the cost of the number of modern computers... Here we touch the quality – evaluation. But it is rather unusual that inspectors write about these issues in their reports. As far as the profiles explain, only the inspectorates in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia do this type of tasks explicitly – but

it is not very clear how it works. In Spain the inspectors check the list of income and expenditure of schools – but that seems to be more a check for correct book keeping than for correct use in terms of “free decisions” how to spend the money and how to raise money. The Portuguese Inspectorate carries out financial audits of the schools.

Some inspectorates begin to be confronted with the issue that schools are allowed to look for sponsoring – for example for laboratories or computers - and in some countries there seems to be some rules for this in order to keep the independence of schools upright; and inspectorates are sometimes asked to keep an eye on that.

Also in the Netherlands more and more the inspectors take a look into these issues of “correct and good use” – in cooperation with the accountants. It is of course not strange to do so, because the spending of money – also for time of teachers for extra work - for example for extra in – service – training – is an expression of priorities in school development and school improvement.

b. *Inspection of “the quality of staff”.*

Almost all inspectorates have always said that they do not give a judgement about the quality of individual teachers, but only about “the teaching in general”. See paragraphs 5 and 6.7. and 6.8. That judgement of course cannot be isolated from the people who take care of the teaching. If a team of inspectors write - for example - that the “teaching of sciences in the upper grades of this upper secondary school“ is excellent, everybody in that school – even if it is a large school - knows who these excellent teachers are. And if it has been written that “the teaching ... etc ... is excellent with the exception of a few chemistry teaching”.... it is clear that either mr. X or mrs. Y apparently is seen by the inspectors as a bad or at least moderate teacher.

Here we touch the issue in paragraph 6.8. about the reports: how specific are these in their judgements about the teaching (and other issues) ? How hiding and general is the language? From the profiles we cannot really know this.

But of course the problems of bad teaching and bad teachers exist.

One could say that it is the responsibility of the school leader (and the board of governors or the public authorities) to take care of the quality of the teaching and also of the individual teachers. And that is certainly true in almost all arrangements in the majority all countries. The consequence should in fact be that the inspectorate should investigate what the school leadership does in order to realize this responsibility. Do they indeed have regular talks about the functioning of each teacher? Do they visit classrooms regularly in order to view the work? Etc. In other words: does the inspectorate give a real and precise judgement about the quality of the system of staff – policy – as a first

guarantee for good teaching and good teachers?

From the profiles and other sources I do not think that most inspectorates have a detailed set of indicators for this issue and take enough time for a real investigation and judgement. Interesting at this point is the arrangement in Sweden that assesses the heads of schools – also about their staff management that of course has to cover at school level the problem of bad – functioning teachers. In Portugal heads are chosen by the school - community, and that of course makes it not too easy for them to carry out a tough staff - management...

In Wales the inspectors report confidentially to the head – after an inspection – when they have seen very weak or very strong teachers – and of course they check in these talks whether the head knows. And everybody knows about this talk. In Scotland they have a similar arrangement.

But in all other countries of course inspectors also see bad or very good teaching and bad teachers...

What can they do? It is well – known that sometimes inspectors have a more or less confidential talk with the school leader after the inspection about this – but without more or less official knowing that this happens like in Wales. Almost all inspectorates deny that they see this as an official policy and many don't do it.

The provisional solution in Wales is interesting but relies on the hope that heads are going to take their responsibility.

Certainly also very interesting is the rather new possibility that Irish boards of schools have that they may request the inspectorate to do an individual assessment of an individual teacher. This independent assessment, done by respected experts gives the board an extra dossier in its decision-making about what to do with a teacher who according to the board (probably on the basis of reports of the head and perhaps also based on complaints of parents and/or students) has quality problems. But of course the board also can request the expert – inspectors in case of doubt about an extra reward or promotion for reason of excellence. The interesting issue is that the responsibility remains with the management board of the school; and that the inspectorate does this specific inspection by exception and not within the frame of a usual school inspection; and thirdly the inspectorate has the possibility to form a more or less separate unit that does not conflict with the usual inspection – work. The Irish inspectorate takes care that in such a case where a requested inspection occurs, this is not done by inspectors who recently were in the school. A comparable provision exists also in the Northern – Irish inspectorate.

Both approaches (the Swedish one and the Irish model) are very interesting for

developing policies in this issue in coming years. I suppose that SICI could anticipate the growing public appeal to be tougher for bad teachers by using these approaches and adapting them.

Apart from this judgement about “bad” teachers or heads there are a few inspectorates who have official tasks in the evaluation of teachers in their career movements. The Irish inspectorate has to evaluate teachers in their probation – period. And the Spanish inspectors have to give an assessment if teachers want to apply for a headship or a specific position in ICT – work. But these are exceptions.

c. Broadening of the remit of the inspectorate.

It is well – known that OFSTED has the broadest remit of all European inspectorates, including not only all kinds of schools and other educational provisions (for example prison education) but also provisions for child care, youth services in cities and regions, and much more. See the long list in the profile. There is a clear tendency that the Anglo-Saxon inspectorates follow this trend – in Scotland, Wales, and Northern – Ireland. And also in the Netherlands the inspectorate has tasks in inspecting the quality of child care for very young children in crèches, albeit not in a system of direct inspection. This broadening towards more “social” provisions is fully understandable with a view on the interrelationship among the provisions. Of course also other inspectorates see this, but most inspect only whether schools and other educational provisions have good links and cooperation with that type of youth provisions, police, welfare work, churches, etc and do not inspect these provisions as such.

It is remarkable that only a few inspectorates write that they are responsible for the inspection of the quality of teacher education: Wales, Northern – Ireland, OFSTED. These inspectorates have separate divisions or departments of inspectors for this sector. The Netherlands also inspects teacher education but in an indirect way, connected with the quality assurance system for higher education in general (like for all other programmes in higher education) so in the Netherlands there is no longer a specific inspection of teacher education, as was the case until ca. 1990. The logic behind the arrangements in OFSTED and other inspectorates is that teacher education is a major factor in the delivery of quality and thus should be inspected by the same inspectorate that inspects schools. The other profiles do not say anything about this interesting issue.

A third aspect of “broadening the remit” is what I have already mentioned about inspecting financial affairs in schools and in the paragraph 8.5.a about inspecting “the good use of money”.

A fourth element is the inspection of higher education apart from teacher education. Only the Netherlands Inspectorates has a task here (see the profile) although rather indirect in connection with the system of peer reviews and accreditation that is working also in all

other European countries.

d. Inspection of “good governance”.

It has to do with the development of “good governance” in the theory and practice of governing institutions like schools. “Good governance” means that the government sets arrangements – for example – that the board of governors of a school has to publish a report about the development of the school once in two years with facts about the results of students, facts about the in – service – training by teachers, facts about the new projects for teaching that have been developed, etc. etc. And also sets a prescription to do self – evaluation. And - for example - a prescription that the board of governors and the school leadership has to have an overall discussion with the representation of the parents about the development of the school and has to publish the report of that discussion. Etc. Etc.

In such a system the idea is that the inspectorate no longer has to inspect the school itself – on site – but has to inspect whether these arrangements are kept well enough. Because the thinking is if that is the case, the governance - system itself will discover weak points in the quality and will take measures. In other words: do the governors and the school management do their work well enough? If yes – so the logic - we may have confidence that in general terms the quality of that school will be ok. Here lies a connection with the so – called “risk – based inspection systems” (see further paragraph 7). But the inspection of good governance has also a value in itself because it gives accent to the own responsibility of the partners (stakeholders) in and around the school.

As far as the profiles write about this development the conclusion could be that elements of it can be found in the Netherlands (in the risk – based system) , Estonia, Sweden and Denmark and also – but more integrated in the full inspection system as such - in England, Scotland, Northern – Ireland, Wales and Ireland. Norway explicitly mentions this inspection of good governance and gives examples of what is done by the national inspectorate when inspecting the arrangements in the counties. Very interesting is the new – coming - Dutch law on “good governance’ that opens a possibility to inspect boards of non – state schools whether they do what they are supposed to do. That law also formulates general principles of good teaching and learning; in the long run judicial work and court decisions could help to bring more clarity about what citizens might expect. The inspectorate also can seek a court in interpretation - matters of prescriptions about quality- aspects in school laws. And the Dutch inspectorate wants to do that more in coming years in order to be sharper and tougher about delivering good quality in schools. So, bottom lines of quality could be fixed more sharply than now. See for further details the profiles mentioned or the contact – persons.

d. *Inspection of" the quality of subject teaching"*

This is not often mentioned as a sensitive issue in the profiles. I wrote already something about this issue in paragraphs 3 and 5.

From the profiles it seems that only Northern – Ireland and Wales have regular subject inspections in schools.

Personally I find the problem of subject inspections – certainly in secondary schools but also in primary schools – rather important. Simply because a good deal of the quality that students experience is defined by good learning and teaching in biology or art or religion or mathematics or... And even if the teaching in general as such is ok with attractiveness, group work, stimulating discovery work, etc. (see the lists of indicators in use) nevertheless the knowledge that is transferred or the content of what is told can be so poor that the effect is bad.

It happens that in the indicators for “learning and teaching” something like “the teaching and learning arrangements are in line with the demands of the subject or topic” is mentioned as one indicator. That is ok, but it does not help much if inspectors are not capable to give an expert evaluation of the period of science teaching they have observed. Subject knowledge, subject learning strategies, subject – bound curiosity, etc. etc. are essential for the success of a school and for the societal and pedagogical success of students. So, the quality of a school expresses itself also (not only!) in – for example - deeper insight in physics for more students than in the average school; the same in history with links to the actual behaviour of students in interest for world developments and also in taking responsibility for street – problems or That same quality shows itself also in deeper insight in and knowledge about climate problems and in actions taken by students (for example in an energy – saving brigade of pupils in a secondary school); and it is easy to give a large number of examples.

But of course; it is almost impossible to do full swing inspections of all subjects in a school. And of course... one can say that the schools themselves can organize mutual subject – inspections. I find that in fact a testimonium paupertatis of the inspectorates and I suppose that in the near future this issue will become more important. Only a few inspectorates make a point of this.

e. *Inspection of “the support agencies”.*

With “support agencies” I mean all types of specific support institutions (regional school advisory centres, national curriculum institutes, etc) or groups from universities or commercial firms that offer coaching, guidance, in – service – training, new materials for students with accompanying stuff for teachers, etc. Of course a question is whether these materials and services are “good”. Almost everywhere it is believed that “the market” of

teachers or schools who buy or make contracts or come to courses or accept offers to take part in national projects, gives the answer. There is no mentioning of explicit inspection of these institutions or services in the SICI – profiles. Here and there one can read that inspectors see the quality of this work in schools – where a school shows that they indeed use an offer for some service or coaching with good results and are satisfied. That is also - as far as I see in the profiles - in some countries (certainly the Netherlands, also England) the official line: inspectors see the well – functioning – or not – in schools and can report about the quality and impact of the support institutions at system level by aggregating their experiences. This is a complicated issue; because it is not simple to draw direct lines between offers of these support institutions and the development of schools. There does not seem to be inspectorates that have specific policies or projects here. I leave these problems for what they are.

9. Inspectorates as organisations.

In this paragraph I want to summarize a number of interesting facts about inspectorates as organisations: size, structure, quality – management, etc. It has been said several times already: inspectorates are very profoundly embedded in the system of educational policy in the countries and in the checks and balances that count there. This makes it difficult to make all too formal and strict comparisons because much depends of the context of the inspectorate.

9.1. Dependency of Ministry and Minister.

All inspectorates report that they have a large autonomy in their daily functioning; how they do their inspections; how they use the allocated budget; and certainly they are free in their judgements: no influence of civil servants or politicians “over their shoulders”... This is also said about the reporting at system level. It seems that the functional independency of all inspectorates of their political powers is ok everywhere; and that most organisations do not care much about a structural, hierarchical link with the ministries. This issue from the nineties seems to have lost its significance.

But the difficult things are of course in the details.

For example: it is not strange that a draft - report about some thematic inspection is sent as a draft to organisations of teachers or their leaders for comment - and also already in draft – form to some civil servants who will be involved in the formulation of a political reaction for the hand of the minister. But how strong are inspector – authors when some of these people call them with some flattering remarks and a “small” request “to formulate that or this sentence a little bit more friendly”? Leading inspectors know that they have to work longer with the leaders in organisations and ministries, so there is a natural tendency to avoid conflicts and to create “good” atmospheres.

Another example: if a small primary school in a small rural village probably will be judged to be very weak... as may be expected after the feedback of the inspectors at the end of their inspection and probably will be judged as such in the coming public report... which of course will cause huge problems in such a situation... and the mayor of that village who by chance is also a parent and by chance is also a friend of some member of parliament....etc.

It is very easy for everybody who works in the business of inspection – and certainly for leading persons – to give more of these examples. In all organisations this kind of stories are told. They are more or less unavoidable in open democracies; but of course they have to be kept under control and inspectorates have to develop procedures in order to minimize these things of influencing reports and procedures. In the profiles this issue is not dealt with, but I am sure that in the practice of the daily work it is an important issue.

In fact almost all inspectorates operate under the formal and final responsibility of their minister of education, but – as is often said – “at arms length”; at a distance from the daily ministerial attention and rather free in decisions of the Senior Chief Inspector.

Political responsibility has to be taken for the framework with the quality areas and indicators that have to be judged in all inspections; for the frequency of inspections and also for the issue how to deal with weak schools. This division of responsibility varies over the countries and over time. It is a very interesting topic from a political and societal viewpoint, but I leave it aside here. Of course decisions about the budget and about appointment of staff are also important. In most countries it seems nowadays that the inspectorate has a lump sum budget with broad responsibilities for the Senior Chief Inspector; and that only the Chief Inspectors are appointed by the minister of education and the rest of staff by the Senior Chief Inspector.

Only OFSTED is structurally independent from the education – ministry, because it is an independent office that directly reports to parliament (the Select Committee for Children, Schools and Families). OFSTED has all kinds of (advisory and cooperation) relations with ministers and (semi – autonomous) government agencies, but all based on a structural independency of the Office. As is said in the profile: “we will report with impartiality and integrity”; and “without fear or favour”.

Although the structural position of the Scottish HMIE is different and more “under” the Scottish government, nevertheless the profile writes that “inspections and reviews are independent, rigorous, open and fair”. This shows the relative value of the general statements about “independence” and position...

The profiles do not report about problems in this relation with ministers, but it is known from practice and from “stories told” that there are tensions and problems.

9.2. Budget, staff numbers.

The profiles give – most of them – a figure that is the percentage of the national education budget that is used for inspection. Some inspectorates have difficulties in giving this figure, for example because salaries are directly covered by the budget of the ministry and are not isolated. Or because all operating costs (travel, print of reports, ICT) are covered by other departments in the ministry or other agencies and cannot easily be isolated. The figures vary from 0.22 % (Czech Republic) to 1.25 % (Scotland). But they are not very reliable and certainly not very well comparable. Most are in the order of 0.5 – 0.7 %. I found it a little bit strange that for many authors of profiles it seemed to be rather difficult to give this figure or to have done the calculations that were needed. Apparently the issue of how expensive inspections may be – related to the budget for education as such – is not a very hot one in most countries.

Staff numbers vary considerably and there seems not to be any proportional relation between budget-staff numbers at one side and the size of the educational system at the other side. For example: the Czech Republic works with 268 inspectors versus the Netherlands with 181 and Spain with 1400 and Denmark with 11.

Of course these figures are incomparable because it depends on the tasks to be done, the kinds of staff- members that have been counted (only inspectors or also clerical staff) etc. One important issue here is whether the inspectorate only works with staff that is under permanent contract or also with temporary staff of various kinds and under various contracts. Like OFSTED and Estyn (Wales) who work with independent contractor bodies and/or also with for example a nominee, an inspector who is staff member of the school to be inspected and who works as a partial team member. Some inspectorates also use full time associated inspectors, for example seconded to the inspectorate from a university for a certain period, for example for a specific thematic inspection. Also working with so called peer inspectors who work for a certain period alongside permanent staff is a possibility. We see various configurations in the profiles and I have the impression that the variations become more numerous and that more and more inspectorates work with non – permanent staff besides the permanent staff.

9.3. Inspecting non – state schools.

Almost all countries have not only schools that are run by public authorities (local, regional or national) but also schools run by “private” groups. Traditionally these are in several countries churches, but also foundations, associations of parents and more recently also more or less commercial groups. There is a lot of literature and research about this issue (see Eurydice – or OECD – publications). The arrangements for the permission to start schools, to receive state- subsidy, to appoint staff, to have diplomas and exams recognized by the state differ in the countries. Also the regulations about the

obligation to follow state rules for the curriculum, eventual existing time – tables, eventual existing rules for class – organisation, etc. differ.

These issues are strongly embedded in the political and educational history of Western – European countries and often have had big political and societal significance.

But the profiles make clear that in most countries these non – state schools are inspected by the national inspectorate. Scotland, the Netherlands, Flanders, England, Northern – Ireland, Ireland, Wales explicitly mention this. This is of course also understandable – certainly where these non – state schools are subsidized (for a large part of their costs) by the state. And because these non – state schools are recognized as places where the youth of the country is allowed to be educated, and for that reason are inspected in the name of the state.

In Denmark, Portugal, Saxony and Rhineland – Palatine these schools are not inspected. But Denmark – and also Sweden – has specific arrangements for keeping an eye on the quality of these schools (see paragraph 7 and the Danish profile). In England a certain group of these schools (see the profile) is inspected by “own” inspectors, but these are certified by OFSTED and use the same framework and instruments as are in use for state – schools.

In some countries the Inspectorate has a task in a kind of “admission – inspection” before a non – state school receives permission to provide students with diplomas and to receive subsidy.

In Flanders all non – state schools (they are the larger part of schools up to 80/90 %) are inspected by the national inspectorate, but there is an agreement that the subject “religion” is not inspected by them but by “own” inspectors appointed (mostly part – time) by the churches or denominational groups, but working under the responsibility of the Senior Chief Inspector of the national Inspectorate – who is in fact head of two inspectorates. In the Netherlands such an arrangement does not exist and the inspectorate can inspect religious education, but if inspectors see that type of lessons, they only judge about the more general teaching aspects, not about the content. In the Anglo – Saxon and German countries religious education is part of the curriculum also in state schools (with possibilities for pupils or parents to choose) and there inspectors are less reluctant.

9.4. Staff of the inspectorate; quality - assurance.

All inspectorates write that they have some induction scheme for newly appointed inspectors. These people are often coupled to a mentor. And there are in – service – training courses about educational policy, about the issue of quality – areas, indicators and practice descriptors and instruments (see paragraph 6.2), etc. The intensity varies.

Some profiles give interesting lists of competencies that are asked from newly appointed inspectors: Hesse, Estonia, Flanders. With not only specific competencies in – e.g. – broad school knowledge, rapid overview in a new situation, but also competencies in personal aspects such as “robustness in conflicts”, “the ability to bring unpleasant messages in a friendly manner”, etc.

A specific topic is the use of permanent staff as inspectors combined with other types of inspectors. Well – known is the system of external inspectors (OFSTED, Wales) who are contracted via external firms or so. Some more inspectorates work with associated inspectors from universities or educational establishments, who are contracted for only a certain short period of a small number of specific inspections. Wales reports about “nominees”, inspectors from the school to be inspected who take part in the inspection team. Wales also works with lay inspectors in some – not all – inspections. Scotland also does so. Most inspectorates work only with permanent staff, which is trained specifically for the job. Scotland reports about the interesting idea to have some 15 “assistant inspectors”, who may be used in “peak – periods” of work. These are freshly – retired inspectors, who do a few inspections under contract in a short period.

Inspectors very often are experienced teachers and/or school leaders. Many inspectorates ask at least some five to nine years of experience “in the school”. Also school – type – bound specific experience and specific subject experience is covered in the composition of inspection teams and in nominating new inspectors. Several inspectorates (Hesse, the Netherlands) mention this explicitly.

Some also mention that inspectors have a certain district – or region – bound coverage and responsibility; for general contacts and knowledge about developments, but also for complaints and in some countries (Northern – Ireland, OFSTED, Scotland) also connected with “area inspections”.

Quality improvement for staff “on the job” is described: introduction courses when new frameworks or so are implemented; training for ICT – innovations, etc.

Some inspectorates report about feedback – mechanisms from schools about the work of inspectors – by filling in some questionnaire after an inspection and sending this form to an analysis department of the inspectorate or a coordinating inspector. This is about their conduct, their ways of chairing meetings, the impression of school leaders about the coverage of all important issues that have been taken care of by the inspectors, etc. But in many profiles this remains rather unclear. It is most often said in the profiles that there is some form of internal evaluation – also regarding the quality of staff – but how this is done is not made very clear or explicit, although of course it has much to do with the quality of the inspectorate and its work. It seems that not very often experienced inspectors or leading inspectors accompany colleagues for giving feedback on issues like

how to observe sharper, how to chair a meeting with a group of parents more fruitfully, etc. Only Wales and Portugal report that a moderator is giving feedback to an inspection team during the process. This of course is very expensive, but also very useful; Wales also uses retired people for this work. Northern – Ireland uses associate assessors who train a team of inspectors. Some inspectorates (the Netherlands, OFSTED, and Lower Saxony) use also video – taped inspections or simulations for these internal discussions.

In Hesse inspectors may use 20 % of their time for other tasks than school inspections in combinations with all kinds of other work and responsibility. This of course has also training effects.

A specific and important issue is the so – called “inter – personal rating - reliability” or “internal – judging – reliability”: how can an inspectorate guarantee that all inspectors are using the framework, the judging rules, the interpretation guides, etc in the same way so that it does not matter which inspectors have inspected a school; and that all schools in comparable circumstances are judged equally? It is about the heart of the matter: the objectivity and comparability of their judgements: school A may not be judged more strictly than school B as a consequence of personal interpretations or of preferences of individual inspectors. This improvement of “inter – personal rating - reliability” is done by various measures: induction training programmes for new inspectors, changing teams continuously , regular dual observations and judgements of teaching episodes and then analyzing the results and connecting these with specific training of inspectors; common judgement of videotaped teaching episodes or management behaviour or.... In Hesse there is a rule that the first two classroom – observations of an inspection – day are always done in pairs of two inspectors. But it is not only about the “inter – personal rating – reliability” in the observation – of – teaching or similar work of inspectors. The same issue is also important when – for example - inspectors have to weigh the information from a self – evaluation report (or the figures about examination results of a school coming from a national database, or...) in advance in order to give a judgement about how to focus the inspection on site; this means that also for that type of analysis and evaluation the issue of inter – personal rating reliability is important and has to be improved continuously. More and more also external research about this type of reliability is done – in some countries like the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and England. And that “testing” of the reliability of the judgements by for example a university is and will remain important because it has to do with the credibility of the inspectorate and its authority.

The profiles do not give many details about this issue of internal quality management, except the general aspects mentioned above. Wales reports about a system for internal audits of various processes of work, executed by an external organisation. Also the Dutch inspectorate has an elaborated system of internal auditing, done by groups of trained

inspectors and other staff who have some time for this and work in a group, managed by a quality – officer. SICI has taken some good initiatives for exchange here. I am sure that this issue remains important and probably will become increasingly important when schools will learn to react on inspection work in a more experienced and more adult way. It is known that some inspectorates also work with rotations in teams and regional teams.

But a more specific analysis of these initiatives of course asks a more detailed study and investigation. It should be very useful and helpful for SICI – inspectorates in their quality – improvement schemes.

9.5. External evaluations, impact?

Twelve inspectorates (Flanders, Estonia, Hesse, Ireland, the Netherlands, Northern – Ireland, Portugal, OFSTED, Scotland, Wales, Slovakia, the Czech Republic) report in their profiles some external evaluation. In some cases this is “only” a part of a general evaluation of government – agency – productivity or correct and efficient functioning in general. In other cases also questions about impact of the inspectorate on the improvement of schools is investigated. Not much is to be found about the content of these evaluations in the profiles. In some cases they have led to changes in the definitions of modes of inspection, for example in Flanders, Northern – Ireland, the Netherlands and in England.

It is very probable that these external evaluations are a rich and very interesting source for information about many of the issues under discussion that I have mentioned above. It would be useful to undertake a specific comparative analysis of these evaluations – of course strongly related as they are to the national contexts of the inspectorate. The profiles do not give enough details for a first overview of the results of these evaluations. The Dutch Inspectorate has received accreditation as an “inspecting organisation” that works in conformity with the norm 17020 of the ISO (International Standardization Organisation). The accreditation process by a small team of external assessors does not check the important impact – issue, but more the procedures for internal quality – management which of course is important and good, but not enough.

Probably this issue of quality assurance of inspectorates plus the issue of impact – research will become more important in the near future – due to a more critical review of spending educational tax – money and the general accountability – trend that of course also counts for inspectorates of education.

10. Comparative tables with facts about “inspection and inspectorates” based on the 18 profiles.

10.1. Introduction.

In this paragraph I try to give an overview of the 18 profiles. I do so by putting together information from the profiles into a number of tables. The profiles have been written in a common format that structures all the information and that enables all readers to rather quickly find information about a certain issue. That format contains the most important issues for a comparison. The format for the profiles is to be found in the annex II in paragraph 12.. In the preceding text I have worked with these issues.

But in the following tables I broke down some of these characteristics and added also a few. In total I have worked with 51 characteristics. I have tried to formulate these as clear as possible in order to avoid multi – interpretation or difficulties in making them operational. This of course is difficult and certainly in some cases was not 100 % successful. But my impression – based on the feedback and the very few questions and remarks that showed this kind of problems – is that the large majority of characteristics indeed are clear enough.

I developed five tables with five groups of characteristics and tried to bring as much information from the profiles into these tables.

The five groups of characteristics are:

Category 1: Characteristics of the inspection process as such with 13 characteristics.

Category 2: Characteristics of the report about the inspection and the follow – up with 9 characteristics.

Category 3: Characteristics of the observation of teaching and learning as one element of the inspection with 6 characteristics.

Category 4: Characteristics of the system of inspection in a more general way with 14 characteristics.

Category 5: Characteristics of specific types of inspections and inspection – products with 9 characteristics.

I give the tables without explanation or illustration; for that further exploration readers have to go to the profiles themselves; and for the comparison and analysis to the preceding paragraphs of this study. The tables contain – so to say – only the rough data from the profiles that I have used. Of course it is a problem to be obliged to pack complex issues about “inspection of schools” into simple scores in terms of plus or minus or figures. Often one feels the need to give some explanation or some remark in order to avoid misunderstandings or too rough simplification... I did not do that. But when I asked the contact – persons to check the tables (March 2010) some of them felt the same need and gave many or a few footnotes or remarks. I have tried to restrict this tendency but nevertheless I have brought some of these remarks into the following text by placing them immediately after the table to which they belong. In this way the information

remains rather complete and correct without too many extensive explanations. But of course it remains so that for all details and context the readers have to go to the profiles themselves.

Of course a problem with so many inspectorates (18) and so many variables (51) is how to design a table or something like that that still is readable.

In order to help readers I at first give the list of characteristics (13) that belong to category 1: “Characteristics of the inspection process as such”. And for each of the 13 characteristics I give an abbreviation that is more or less fitting to the significance of the wording.

In the table I (One) itself that follows immediately I use these abbreviations and the abbreviations for the inspectorates. With some simple check of the abbreviations – eventually with the help of a copy at hand for the inspectorate’s list - the tables are readable. Asyia Kazmi, contact person of OFSTED helped in suggesting to place the characteristics in the vertical columns – and did it also which compensated my rather poor WORD – skills.

The abbreviations for the inspectorates that I use will in almost all cases speak for themselves. But here is the list that I used (of these 25 I could only use 18 available profiles in the tables; these are given in cursive):

A for Austria	<i>NI for Northern – Ireland</i>
<i>B-F for Flanders</i>	<i>NL for the Netherlands</i>
B-G for the German – speaking part of Belgium	NRW for Northrhine – Westphalia in Germany
B-W for the French – speaking part of Belgium	<i>O for OFSTED in England</i>
<i>CZ for the Czech Republic</i>	<i>P for Portugal</i>
<i>DK for Denmark</i>	<i>RHP for Rhineland – Palatine in Germany</i>
<i>EE for Estonia</i>	RO for Romania
<i>ES for Spain</i>	<i>SAX for Saxony in Germany</i>
F for France	<i>SC for Scotland</i>
<i>H for Hesse in Germany</i>	<i>SE for Sweden</i>
<i>IE for Ireland</i>	<i>SK for the Slovak Republic</i>
LT for Lithuania	<i>W for Wales</i>
<i>N for Norway</i>	

10.2. Category 1 “Characteristics of the inspection process as such”

Here is the list with the first group of characteristics:

1.FI	There is a system of full inspections of schools, in use since the year x.
1.QA	The usual set of quality – aspects and indicators in a framework is in use.
1.CN	Criteria and norms for judging schools are in the framework or otherwise known.
1.ET	Results of examinations and tests are used by the inspectorate.
1.Fr	The frequency of inspection of one particular school.
1.NY	The number of schools per year that are inspected.
1.MI	The usual methods of inspection are in use: questionnaires, interviews, observations of learning and teaching in classrooms, meetings, study of files, and analysis of school documents.
1.NO	Notice of the inspection is given x days in advance.
1.IN	The school has to deliver rather much information in advance.
1.NoI	The number of inspectors taking part in an inspection.
1.DI	The number of days that the inspectors work in the school itself (the school phase).
1.DS	National Data and Statistics about the school are used, also if these are not directly available in files of the inspectorate.
1.EF	Electronic school – files are in use and/or under development.

Here is the table I with the 18 inspectorates and the 13 characteristics from this first category:

The table for category I: Characteristics of the inspection process as such.

	There is a system of full inspections of schools, in use since the year x.	The usual set of quality – aspects and indicators in a framework is in use.	Criteria and norms for judging schools are in the framework or otherwise known.	Results of examinations and tests are used by the inspectorate.	The frequency of inspection of one particular school.	The number of schools per year that are inspected.	The usual methods of inspection are in use:	Notice of the inspection is given x days in advance.	The school has to deliver rather much information in advance.	The number of inspectors taking part in an inspection.	The number of days that the inspectors work in the school itself (the school phase).	National Data and Statistics about the school are used, also if these are not directly available in files of the	Electronic school – files are in use and/or under development.
Cat.1	FI	QA	CN	ET	Fr	NY	M I	NO	IN	NoI	DI	DS	EF
A													
B-F	1991	+	+	+	8	470	+	42	+	2-4	3-6	+	+
B-G													
B-W													
CZ	1995	+	+	+	4	4000	+	7-14	+	1-9	2-5	+	-
DK	-	-	-	+	n.a.	n.a.	+	n.a.	+	2-5	1-10	+	+
EE	-	-	+	+	<8	130	+	>100	+	1-2	1-5	+	+
ES	+	+	-	+	3-6	?	+	+	+	2-3	3-4	+	+
F													

H	2005	+	+	-	5	400	+	70	+	2-4	2-4	+	+
IE	1994/2004	+	+	+	n.a.	850	+	>21	+	1-6	2-6	+	-
LT													
N	-	-	-	+	n.a.	n.a.	+	30	+	2-4	-	+	-
NI	Ca 1992	+	+	+	< 7	varies	+	28	+	>2	2-4	+	+
NL	1993	+	+	+	1-4	?	+	30	-+	1-5	1-4	+	+
NRW													
O	1992	+	+	+	3 - 5	7000	+	0-2	no	1-5	2	+	+
P	1999/2006	+	+	+	4	287	+-	90	+	3	1-2	+	-
RHP	2007	+	+	+	5	400	+	10 - 180	+-	>3	1 +	+	+
RO													
SAX	2006	+	+	-	6	280	+	60-200	+	3	3-4	+	-
SC	1990	+	+	+	7/6	317-692	+	15	-+	1-6	<5	+	-
SE	2003	+	+	+	6	2000	+	90	+	2	2	+	-
SK	2000	+	+	+	5	?	+	30	+	2-5	2-5	+	?
W	1992	+	+	+	6	280	+	20	-+	Var	2-4	+	-

Notes

Belgium – Flanders:

- For FI: Changed in 2009 (“differentiated” inspection where only a selection of indicators, the so – called “focus”, are examined)

Spain:

- For FI and general: Like also in some other countries this formulation could lead to misunderstandings, because it suggests that there were no inspections of schools before the year x. In many countries this was the case, but not in the sense of the “modern” system as described in paragraph 3. For example in Spain a type of general inspections of schools were done from 1849 on with major changes in 1978 and a gradual evolution towards the present system of full inspections in the Autonomous Regions; see the profile for further descriptions.

Northern – Ireland/Ireland:

- For FI: See the general remark for Spain. In Ireland for example there have been full inspections of schools; in North and South, since the 1830’s. In 1920, the Inspectorate divided into two inspectorates, one for each new jurisdiction, North and South. In the early 1990’s inspection reports were published for the first time and, in 1998, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) of Northern – Ireland introduced focused inspections which focused on a particular aspect of a school’s provision.

The Netherlands:

- For Fr: Every school is (risk) analyzed annually. The frequency of investigations of a school depends on the result of the risk analysis. Every school is visited at least once every four year. See for the various modes the profile.
- For NO: The standard notification is 30 days. It’s also possible to go to a school without announcement.

Portugal:

- For FI and general: “Inspection” and the activity of the Inspectorate in Portugal (IGE) have not only to do with “school evaluation”. Although the external evaluation of schools is assigned to the Inspectorate, and its weight among the activities is gradually increasing, in 2008 only 20% of inspectors’ days were allocated to it. The IGE does not call them inspections, but “external evaluations” instead. All the other activities run by the Inspectorate can be called inspections. The IGE started with this system in 2006; however, the Inspectorate undertook a former programme of full evaluation in the period 1999-2002.
- For QA: Since 2008/2009 the indicators per domain of analysis are explicit.

- For Fr: “External evaluations” of schools: yes – schools are supposed to be evaluated every 4 years. “Inspections” (it can be a thematic inspection or something else; see the profile) of a school or in a school can be done by inspectors from 0 to several times a year.
- For MI: All usual methods are used except classroom observations.

Scotland:

- For IN: We do not ask for” rather much” but we do ask for some information in advance.
- For NY: In 2008/2009 at primary and secondary level 317 schools were inspected. If we include pre-school facilities and special schools the number was – in 2008/2009 - 692 in total.

Sweden:

- For Fr: Since 2010 the frequency is 4 ½ years.
- For NY: 1000 in Regular Supervision and 500 in thematic quality evaluation.
- For DI: Since 2010 it varies between ½ and 5 days depending on the needs of the school.

Wales:

- For IN: Schools are required to provide a minimum of information prior to inspection.

10.3. Category II: “Characteristics of the report about the inspection and the follow – up”.

Here is the list with the 9 characteristics for this category:

Category 2: Characteristics of the report about the inspection and the follow – up:

2.IR	Immediately after the inspection an oral feedback is given to the school.
2.DR	A draft report about the inspection is send to the school for comment.
2.ND	This is done x days after the end of the school phase of the inspection.
2.RC	A conference with the school is held about the report after completion of it.
2.JQ	In the report there is a clear judgment about each Quality Aspect.
2.BI	The report gives a clear list of strengths and weaknesses.
2.RP	The report about a school is available to the public.
2.OR	The school is obliged to respond to the report with an action- plan and to send that plan to some authority.
2.AA	The school has to agree with some authority about this action-plan.

The table with the 18 inspectorates for these 9 characteristics:

The table for Category II: Characteristics of the report about the inspection and the follow – up:

	Immediately after the inspection an oral feedback is given to the school.	A draft report about the inspection is send to the school for comment.	This is done x days after the end of the school phase of the inspection.	A conference with the school is held about the report after completion of it.	In the report there is a clear judgment about each Quality Aspect.	The report gives a clear list of strengths and weaknesses.	The report about a school is available to the public.	The school is obliged to respond to the report with an action- plan and to send that plan to some authority.	The school has to agree with some authority about this action-plan.				
Cat.	IR	DR	ND	RC	JQ	BI	RP	OR	AA				
A													
B-F	+	+	5-30	-	+	+	+	-	-				
B-G													
B-W													
CZ	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+				
DK	-	-	-	-	-	+-	+	+	+				
EE	+	+	10	-	+	+	+	+	+				
ES	+	?	2-3	?	+	+	+-	+	+				
F													
H	+	+	45	+	+	+	-	+	+				
IE	+	+	42	+	+	+	+	-	-				
LT													

N	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	+	n.a.	+	+	+	+				
NI	+	+	5	+	+	+	+	+	+				
NL	+	+	3-6	-	+	+	+	_ +	-				
NRW													
O	+	+	5(ca)	-	+	+	+	No	+				
P	-	+	30- 35	-	+	+	+	- +	- +				
RHP	-	-	60	+	+	+	-	+	+				
RO													
SAX	-	-		+	+	+	-	+	+				
SC	+	+	7	+	+	-	+	+	+				
SE	+	+	15- 25	+-	+	+-	+	+	+-				
SK	+	+	21	+	+	+	+-	+	-				
W	+	+	5	-	+	+	+	+	- +				

Notes:

Belgium – Flanders:

- For OR and AA: this only in case of a negative advice for the ministry to continue the license and subsidy (see the profile) .

OFSTED:

- For IR: Yes but feedback is given throughout the inspection.
- For OR: Only if a school is judged inadequate then the local authority is expected to draw up an improvement plan and send this to OFSTED.
- For AA: If a school is judged inadequate it is expected the plan will be drawn up in consultation with the school but there is no formal expectation it will be agreed with the school.

Portugal:

- For OR and AA: Schools that do not perform well in several domains are monitored by the regional services of the ministry of education. Together, they develop some improvement actions.

Saxony:

- For IR: Only the quality of the inspection - procedure as such is discussed. The schools give a written feedback after the discussion. An oral feedback of the results of the school-visit is not given.

Scotland:

- For BI: See the profile for the way HMIE describes the strength and weaknesses – not in a list, but with descriptions in five levels.
- For OR: Not every school inspected is “obliged” to come up with an action plan; see the profile.

Slovakia:

- For RP: The report about a school is partially available to the public. The outcomes - not the details – have to be on the school website.

Sweden:

- For RC: An oral report is given not to the whole school but to the head teacher and a conference is held with the municipality who is free to invite who they want.
- For BI: In Regular Supervisions the judgements are only about discrepancies in relation to the Education Act and other steering documents. In Thematic Quality Evaluations the judgements are about both strengths and weaknesses in relation to the quality aspects set up in the evaluation.
- For AA: The action plan should be approved by the Municipality but the Municipality can't choose not to respond.

Wales:

- For AA: Only if the school is formally identified as causing concern.

10.4. Category III: “Characteristics of the observation of teaching and learning as one element of the inspection”

Here is the list with the 6 characteristics belonging to this category:

Category 3: Characteristics of the observation of teaching and learning as one element of the inspection:

3.OT	Teaching periods (lessons) are observed as a whole, completely.
3.OP	Teaching periods (lessons) are observed partially, during 20-30 minutes.
3.TL	The observation focuses on the learning of pupils and on the teaching activities.
3.SO	The inspectors work with a systematic sampling of teachers and subjects and grades in order to get a complete picture of the learning and teaching in the school.
3.FT	Teachers can get feedback, immediately or in a session at the end of the day.
3.GW	Part of the inspection is a general going around (walk) with also glances of learning and teaching in the school as a whole.

Here is the table for this category:

The table for category III: Characteristics of the observation of teaching and learning as one element of the inspection

	Teaching periods (lessons) are observed as a whole, completely.	Teaching periods (lessons) are observed partially, during 20-30 minutes.	The observation focuses on the learning of pupils and on the teaching activities.	The inspectors work with a systematic sampling of teachers and subjects and grades	<i>Teachers can get feedback, immediately or in a session at the end of the day.</i>	Part of the inspection is a general going around (walk) with also glances of learning							
Cat.3	OT	OP	TL	SO	FT	GW							
A													
B-F	+	-	+	+	+	+							
B-G													
B-W													
CZ	+	-	+	+	+	+							
DK	-	-	-	-	-	-							
EE	-	-	-	-	-	+							
ES	+	+-	+	+	+	+-							
F													
H	-	20	+	+	-	+							
IE	+	-	+	+	+	-							
LT													

N	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.							
NI	+	-	+	+	-	-							
NL	+	+	+	+	-	+-							
NRW													
O	+	Yes	Yes	+	+	+							
P	-	-	-	-	-	+							
RHP	-	+	+	+	-	+							
RO													
SAX	+	-	+	+	-	+							
SC	+	+	+	+	+	+							
SE	+-	+-	+-	+-	-	+							
SK	+	-	+	+	+-	+							
W	+-	-	+	+	+	-							

Notes:

Northern – Ireland:

- For OP: Sometimes partial lessons are observed as well as complete lessons. ETI would not set out with the intention of only observing partial lessons during an inspection; however inspectors often observe some partial lessons as well as complete ones.
- For FT: Immediate feedback is not always given for reasons of time pressures, both on the teacher and on the inspector. However, if the lesson ends at a natural break in the daily timetable (for example, the morning break or lunch time) often some brief feedback will be given. If there are serious concerns about the quality of a teacher's work, that teacher will be spoken to as soon as possible after the lesson and a meeting arranged, at which the teacher and the principal of the school will be asked to attend, to receive feedback on the quality of that teacher's work.

- For GW: It is usual (and natural) that inspectors walking around the school will observe (and internalise) and make evaluations relating to the quality of the school's ethos and climate for learning. Inspections also involve some general "sampling of learning" (for example, an inspector might follow a pupil in a class through a school day's time-table – we call this a "pupil pursuit").

OFSTED:

- For OT: This can happen but there is not an explicit demand that a full lesson will be observed.
- For SO: Although a formulaic approach is not taken, it is the expectation that a range of teachers, subjects and age groups will be observed.

Saxony:

- For GW: a round tour through the school takes place after a short contact - discussion which is necessary for organising the school visit. The head master leads the evaluators through the school and across the campus. It does not serve as a grading of the school building or the local conditions.

Sweden:

- For OT, OP, TL and SO: in Regular Supervisions it depends on the needs of the school.

10.5. Category IV: Characteristics of the system of inspection in a more general way.

Here is the list with the 14 characteristics belonging to this category:

4.SP	Schools are obliged to have a School Program (or: school working plan; or: program of activities) .
4.SEO	Schools are obliged to do self-evaluation and to document this.
4.SEE	Schools are expected to do self-evaluation, but there is no legal obligation.
4.IP	Non-state schools (“private schools”) are inspected in more or less the same way.
4.NI	The number of Inspectors available.
4.PB	The proportion of the budget for inspection as part of the total education budget.
4.OI	The inspectorate is independent from the Ministry of Educ. as an organisation.
4.FI	The inspectorate is functionally independent from the Ministry.
4.SI	School improvement is the main focus of the inspectorate.
4.AP	Serving the public accountability of schools is the main focus of the inspectorate.
4.IT	New inspectors have an induction period with courses, mentors a.o.
4.TP	The inspectorate has an in-service – facility for all staff.
4.SF	Inspectors receive feedback – systematically - on their work from schools and/or from colleagues and managers.
4.EI	There is some form of external evaluation of the inspectorate.

And the table for this category:

The table for category IV: Characteristics of the system of inspection in a more general way.

	Schools are obliged to have a School Program (or: school working plan: or: program of activities)	Schools are obliged to do self-evaluation and to document	Schools are expected to do self-evaluation, but there is no	Non-state schools ("private schools") are inspected in more or less the same way.	The number of Inspectors available.	The proportion of the budget for inspection as part of the total education budget.	The inspectorate is independent from the Ministry of Educ. as an organisation.	The inspectorate is functionally independent from the	School improvement is the main focus of the inspectorate.	Serving the public accountability of schools is the main focus of the inspectorate.	New inspectors have an induction period with courses, mentors a.o.	The inspectorate has an in-service – facility for all staff.	Inspectors receive feedback – systematically - on their work from schools and/or from colleagues and managers.	There is some form of external evaluation of the inspectorate.
Category 4	SP	SEO	SEE	IP	NI	PB	OI	FI	SI	AP	IT	TP	SF	EI
A														
B-F	+	-	+	+	145	?	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
B-G														
B-W														
CZ	+	+	-	+	268	0.22 %	-	+	-+	+	+	+	+	+
D	+	+	-	-	7-3-	?	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	-

K					2									
EE	+	+		+	47	0.2 %	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
ES	+	-	+	+	140 0	?	-	- +	+	-	+	+	-	+
F														
H	+	+		-	48		-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
IE	+	-	+	+	133	0.2 %	-	-	+	+-	+	+	+	-
LT														
N	+	+		+	42+ 13	low	-	- +	-	+	-	+	-	+
NI	+	-	+	+	66	?	-	+	+	+-	+	+	+	+
NL	+	-	+	+	181	0,8%	-	+	+-	+-	+	+	+	+
N R W														
O	No	-	+	No	200 + AIs	0,4%	Yes	+	Yes	+	+	+	+	+
P	+	+		-	206	0,24 %	-	+	-	+	+	+	- +	+
R HP	+	-	+	-	20 +	?	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	-
R O														
SA X	+	+		-	43		-	+	+	-	+	+	+	-
SC	+	+		+	95+		+-	+	+-	+-	+	+	+	+
SE	+	+		+	290	1.63	+	+	+-	+-	+	+	+	-

						%								
SK	+	+		+	200	0.36 %	+ -	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
W	+	-	+	+	55 + 600 AI's	< 1 %	+	+	+ -	- +	+	+	+	+

Notes:

Northern – Ireland:

- For PB: This is difficult to calculate because ETI works mainly for three different Departments: Department of Education; Department for Employment and Learning; and Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. It also does some work for other Departments in relation to educational provision in prisons and educational provision in Agricultural Colleges. It is therefore difficult to calculate the proportion.

OFSTED:

- For SP: Not obliged to but most do.
- For IP: Independent schools have their own framework and although some judgements are similar others are not.
- For NI: Approximately 200 HMI and considerably more additional inspectors (AIs) who may work full or part time for inspection service providers.
- For SI: The purpose of inspection is to promote improvement in schools and improve outcome for learners.
- For AP: This is a focus but not the only or main focus.
- For EI: Through a cross party parliamentary committee.

Portugal:

- For NI: School year 2008/2009. However, only 82 participated in the External Evaluation of Schools.
- For EI: As far as the External Evaluation of Schools programme is concerned.

Saxony:

- For EI: We have started recently a scientific project, in cooperation with the University of Leipzig. The aim of the project is to develop more knowledge about the reception, use and gain of the school evaluation.

Slovakia:

- For PB: taken as a part of the budget for pre –primary, primary and secondary schools, salaries included.

Sweden:

- For PB: The total budget includes preschool, primary, secondary, upper secondary and adult education (not universities, other higher education or research)

10.6. Category V: Specific types of inspections and inspection – products.

Here is the list with the 9 characteristics for this category:

5.WS	The inspectorate has a special attention for and regime for weak or very weak schools.
5.ISE	There is a specific form of evaluation of the self – evaluations of schools.
5.TI	There are thematic inspections at national or regional scale.
5.AS	The inspectorate has specific advisory tasks towards schools.
5.AG	The inspectorate has specific advisory tasks towards the government.
5.DC	The inspectorate accepts complaints about schools and tries to solve these.
5.RB	There is a type of Risk – Based inspection.
5.AR	The inspectorate aggregates the findings in an Annual Report about the “State of Education”.
5.GP	The inspectorate publishes “good practices”.

And the table for category V:

The table for category V: specific types of inspections and inspection – products

	The inspectorate has a special attention for and regime for weak or very weak schools.	There is a specific form of evaluation of the self – evaluations of schools.	There are thematic inspections at national or regional scale.	The inspectorate has specific advisory tasks towards schools.	The inspectorate has specific advisory tasks towards the government.	The inspectorate accepts complaints about schools and tries to solve these.	There is a type of Risk – Based inspection.	The inspectorate aggregates the findings in an Annual Report about the “State of Education”.	The inspectorate publishes “good practices”.					
Cat.5	WS	ISE	TI	AS	AG	DC	RB	AR	GP					
A														
B-F	+	-	+	-	+	+-	+	+	-					
B-G														
B-W														
CZ	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	-					
DK	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	+					
EE	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					
ES	+	-	+	+	+-	+	+	+	+					
F														
H	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-					
IE	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+-	+					
LT														

N	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+				
NI	+	++	+	-	+	+	-	+(2	+				
NL	+	-	+	-	+	+-	++	+	-+				
NRW													
O	+	-	+	-	+	+-	+	+	+				
P	+	+	+	-	-+	+	-	-	-				
RHP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-				
RO													
SAX	-	+	-	-	-+	-	-	+	-				
SC	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+(3)	+				
SE	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	+				
SK	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-				
W	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-				

Notes:

Ireland:

- For AR: The Annual Report covers a number of years.

Northern – Ireland:

- For RB: The Education and Training Inspectorate is moving to a situation where around 30% of its inspections annually are selected on the basis of risk.

OFSTED:

- For ISE: The self evaluation form is not evaluated but the systems by which the school knows its strengths and weaknesses inform judgements about leadership and management.
- For DC: Yes, if the complaint is considered a “qualifying complaint”. We also consider complaints about inspections from schools.

Portugal:

- For AG: Although it is not an advisory body, the Portuguese Inspectorate of Education is expected to propose actions aimed at improving the education system and to collaborate in their implementation.

Wales:

- For RB: A risk based approach has operated from 2004-2010. The new cycle of inspections from September 2010 will not be risk based.

11. Some problems and developments in inspectorates and in inspection of schools.

In this paragraph I want to mention and describe – rather shortly and superficially – some problems and developments that came into my mind in the work on the profiles and this comparative review. My purpose with this is only to draw the attention of colleagues to these in order to stimulate thinking and discussion.

- a. Tension between the three functions of inspections: stimulating quality, informing about quality, guaranteeing the bottom line of quality.*

See earlier remarks in paragraphs 5 (about the “knowing” by inspectors for example about subjects, about the clarity of the judgements, and 6.10 (about the improvement – mission of inspectorates). The funds for expanding unlimitedly the inspectorates are not available of course. And so choices about the depth and scope of the inspections of schools have to be made. For example: How many days? With how many inspectors? Also a judgement about the quality of subject – teaching? In which frequency? Only for schools that seem to show risks? Could a proportional arrangement of inspection work bring a solution? In the profiles it is very clear that all inspectorates see the impossibility to do the type of broad and deep inspections of all schools that were done by OFSTED in the early nineties. Many inspectorates formulate arguments that this is not necessary and even undesirable: the respect for the autonomy of schools, the desirability that schools develop their own good governance also in terms of self – evaluation and involvement of other stakeholders in the environment, the impossibility to have an inspectorate that covers all subjects and issues in quality sufficiently enough. Various solutions for finding an adequate balance are reported. See also paragraph 7 for more details.

In the profiles and the preceding comparative analysis I see four solutions that compete. These are the arrangements of Northern – Ireland (“smart planning”), of Flanders (“differentiated but nevertheless a covering system of inspections”), of Estonia or Norway (“only thematic plus for the real risky schools a full inspection”), of the Netherlands (“risk – based plus thematic”).

The Northern – Irish model of “smart planning” with various modes of inspection, combined with their possibilities for schools to ask for self – evaluative inspections of a deeper character seems to me to have promising elements, but it has to be seen against the long history of accent on self – evaluation in Northern – Ireland; and against the strong regional structures of governance and support; and against the rather small system that enables many people to work “at arms’ length”. The inspectorate (and some others like the inspectorate of Northrhine – Westphalia do so) offers schools the possibility to mention one aspect of quality that anyhow will be inspected; other aspects are chosen by the inspectorate, but not all potential aspects of quality from the broad framework are inspected. Also this is a possible contribution to the stimulating – function of the inspectorate.

It is – in that specific Northern – Irish situation I think - a working combination of the three main functions of the inspections as these have been developed in the last 15 years. These functions are:

1. The “right” of each school to be inspected by independent experts and to receive a “mirror” and a stimulus for improvement and further development.
2. The right of society to be guaranteed that there are no schools below a minimum quality standard that are not known and where on the basis of the inspection quick steps are taken for improvement.
3. The right of society to have periodically a report about the state of the system – in general and thematic.

Also in the Flemish model the three functions are served in balance. All schools are inspected but in differentiated and proportional modes. There is coverage of all schools in order to fulfil the guarantee function. And by inspecting specific developments and issues or promising aspects or in contrary issues that seem to be “bad” in the particular school (after the one –day – start of the inspection) the improvement function can be served. But a problem is that Flanders has so few inspectors that they formally have a frequency of nine years – in their planning; which is a problem for the first and third functions. The Flemish model is still very new so we have to see how it is developed further.

The second and third functions are served well in the new Dutch model of risk – based inspections and also in the Estonian and Norwegian models; under the condition that the risk – analysis instruments of the Dutch are working well. But the first function is not served well, because many schools without big problems are not inspected (unless they are taken in the annual sample or are inspected unannounced) or only in a certain theme or in a rather short visit. So, many schools do not have the possibility to see much of the value of being inspected...

But of course the question may be asked if all Northern – Irish schools indeed feel to have a strong stimulus from the inspections...? That is the important question of impact of inspections on schools and on the system.

Impact research in these matters remains important but is rather difficult to do. So, it remains the question whether this type of research can bring us answers about these strategic issues. Answers that are so convincing that they are decisive for this strategic debate. I do not think that research – results will be so clear, also because of course there are too many intervening variables. See what I wrote in paragraph three about inspection work as a node of educational political issues. And the consequence is that this strategic discussion will remain very relevant, but that it will be difficult to weigh the arguments and experiences. Only a rather thorough analysis of a national situation can bring more clarity about these problems. Perhaps the new OECD – project about assessment and evaluation will be able to help? The project is called “OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes”. See on : www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy

Perhaps at the end of the day the stimulating function of inspections has to be skipped? Because that function perhaps is better to be served by local or regional “governance” - structures, like in Estonia, Norway, but also in Denmark and Sweden. And in the arrangements in Anglo Saxon countries with their Local Educational Authorities and the German Länder with their Schulaufsicht? Certainly if indeed “Zielvereinbarungen” – working and improving agreements – are agreed among the parties involved. See paragraphs 6.9. and 6.10 for more details. In this line inspectorates must take less responsibility for “improvement” of schools and of course politicians must not ask for the impact of inspectorates under that heading...

Another important mechanism for connecting the improvement and stimulating function with a type of inspection is the appearance of “critical friends” that are hired by the school from its support budget. The German association “Blick über den Zaun” (“a view over the fence”) (www.blickueberdenzaun.de) is a growing network of schools that do so. Also in other countries this type of networks and groups exist. Perhaps it could even be possible – in the future – to give money to schools that has to be used for that type of focussed inspections, to be done by certified groups or firms? With a kind of meta – inspections that focuses on this “good governance”?

I am rather sure that this type of strategic discussions will remain very relevant for most inspectorates. And it should be useful for SICI to invest in deeper analysis of national cases and in exchange of experiences and arguments.

b. What is the value of an inspection for a good school?

Directly connected with the first problem formulated above is the value of school inspections for “good schools”. In “older” inspectorates the number of schools that doubt the value that a new inspection (third round, fourth round) brings for them, is growing – as is shown in some investigations and also in the feedback they give. Because the inspection is rather superficial in their eyes. It is ok, that the external inspection confirms what good schools already know about their own quality. It is also ok, that society is confirmed in its knowledge about such a school. But the inspection report gives the school no new impulses. See under problem 1. The danger of this - if nothing is done - could be that schools are saying louder and louder, that the inspectorate is only valuable for the “mediocre or bad schools” and that the good or excellent schools are not helped in their development. So, inspection becomes something for “the bad and ugly”... and the added value of the inspectorate for the development of all schools is questioned more and more. Apart from the general strategic aspects (see above) the idea to do specific inspections of schools that seem to be excellent in certain aspects of quality in order to produce “good practice”, valued as such by experienced inspectors, is a good one and can help also in pushing back that idea. See the profiles of OFSTED and Northern – Ireland. It is not 100% clear how the differentiated Flemish model will develop in coming years, but potentially this model is promising also for this second problem.

c. Finding and keeping competent inspectors.

Some inspectorates report that they have growing problems in contracting younger, new inspectors with fitting competencies. One of the causes for that is that inspectors with good experience, who have had the opportunity to inspect some hundreds of schools and who have learned much about factors that make schools “good schools” and who have seen many varieties of management of developing schools, etc... are wanted experts for management functions in larger and complicated schools. In some countries (certainly in the UK and in the Netherlands) heads of these larger schools with their growing autonomy and responsibility for considerable budgets and sometimes more than 100 staff, earn more than inspectors and also that is a factor in finding good staff for the inspectorate. In particular in “older” inspectorates this drain from the inspectorate towards the school system may be seen. Some rightly say that this is very good, because it brings new quality in the schools. Also the system of registered inspectors in England and Wales works in this way: people, who have worked a period as registered inspector, can easily find a job as school head or department head. It is not bad to invest in younger people with specific competencies; but at the other hand it remains important that inspectors have a certain experience – not

only as teachers or heads (most inspectorates ask some 7 or 9 years of this experience at least) but also have enough maturity in person, in handling conflicts, etc (see some lists of competences in some profiles e.g. the Hesse profile). Of course salaries and conditions for inspectors must remain competitive with other education jobs, but the intrinsic reward in the inspecting job of seeing so many schools and practices and to have the chance to learn so broadly and rapidly, is an important asset of inspectorates and must be “kept high”. It is not a bad investment for inspectorates to invest in initial training and in service training of inspectors, even if these experts disappear after some five years or so into other parts of the education system. They can spread the evaluation experience. But the consequence of course is that the budget of inspectorates for training has to be relatively high, compared with other “information – processing” organisations.

d. Inter – personal - rating – reliability.

Also related to the quality of the inspectorate (like the previous problem) is this important “inter – personal - rating – reliability”. Simply said: the guarantee that all inspectors come to the same judgements in comparable situations. This guarantee is important because of course it is unacceptable that the judgement about an aspect of quality in a school – and certainly not the judgement “very weak school” - depends on the preference or too personal interpretation of the framework by a certain inspector. Most inspectorates have invested in this in the induction period of new inspectors (see the profiles) but the permanent training and research in this important aspect of work seems to be neglected in some inspectorates. I base that statement on several profiles that do not contain much about this issue, although it was asked. And on my personal impressions of some of the work of some inspectorates. That of course is understandable, taken into account the time–and budget–pressure. But in the long run it is very damaging for the image and reliability of the inspectorate.

It is interesting to read in the fascinating study about the history of Ireland’s inspectorate (Coolanan and O’Donovan, 2009) – page 51 – that already in 1881 the six Head Inspectors as a group spent a few days in one school in order to do an exercise in “arriving at a common uniform standard of examination and marking”... And that they were ordered to do this same exercise with their regional groups of inspectors. The reason was that there were simply too many complaints of teachers about the lack of uniformity in the inspections of schools; and the Resident Commissioner, Dr. Keenan, understood very well how damaging this was for the “standing” of the inspectorate.

The judgements of the inspectorate have to be trusted and any discussion about the value of a certain report or judgement that brings some doubt is damaging that

necessary trust. So, the same type of investment – with of course also other means and methods - as in 1881 is also very necessary in 2010!

e. Informing the public.

The number of countries where inspection reports about schools are public is growing. This fits in the modern open society. But as is said often in “newer” inspectorates that still hesitate about making public the reports about schools, the danger can be that parents and journalists only pick some messages from the reports and come to a very one- sided and unjustified one-liner-judgement... and on this basis it can often lead to the ranking of schools in a town or region; on a very limited or even wrong basis. The experience of “older” inspectorates is that after a few years of problems in this area, parents and journalists have learned to work with public reports. Interesting and good developments are that summaries of reports in “plain language” are published by the inspectorate itself. These summaries can be used by schools to inform the parents and other people. The “full report” then remains public but will be used only by people who are really interested and who take the time and energy to really study it. Another interesting and promising development is the OFSTED – line that the leading inspector has to take the duty to write a letter to all pupils with the main findings of the inspection in terms of “what it means for the learning and living of the children or students”. This forces the inspectors to bring the results of the inspection back to very clear messages that focus on learning and teaching. I suppose that in the coming years the quest for new and focused forms of reporting the public will find out more new means for communication about the findings and judgements of the inspectorates (about schools, about themes, about the system). This is also relevant because good reporting is the main instrument of the inspectorate to show its “added value” to the public. See also some ideas about strengthening the “improvement focus” of the inspections in paragraph 6.10. But “reporting the public” is not only about the means of communication... It is also about the value of the reports in terms of clear messages and judgements, about all aspects of quality that really matter, in particular about what and how is learned in schools and how that learning is stimulated and supported. See some of my remarks in paragraph 6.8.

Although it is not visible in the profiles, I nevertheless mention a problem that I see in the “industrialisation” of the writing of the inspection reports about schools. Inspectorates design “formats” with general text that can be used in school reports. Of course this is efficient but I have the impression that in some cases this method - combined with the tendency to keep the reports rather short - leads to rather general and not very specific and detailed reports about a school. If the judgement is not clear and sharp, but too general and superficial and if it is not

clear that all judgements are based on readable facts (the “descriptive element” - see paragraph 6.10 about the “three – layer –result”) and on deeper analyses in the report, the “standing” of the report is damaged severely and it will not be taken very serious. Of course, if the only function of the report is to assure the school, the public and the authorities that the school is “ok” (“good enough”); and that there is no risk for a worsening quality in the near future, such a short and “superficial” report will do. But in that case all elements of stimulus and improvement ideas have disappeared.

f. Evaluating the quality of individual persons.

All inspectorates say that they do not inspect individual teachers or heads of schools. I have already written something about the feedback that in some cases is given to teachers in order to satisfy their need to hear something about what they are doing. See in paragraph 8.5. Many inspectors know the experience that teachers confess that after sometimes more than twenty years this is the first time that a professional enters into the classroom and sees what and how you are doing... And it is known that in some cases inspectors take the opportunity “after closing the concluding session” to speak softly with a head about a certain teacher... In the profiles of Wales and Ireland it is reported that inspectors do this officially. If in the coming years the staff – management in schools is developing well and if heads of departments or of schools take their tasks of assessing teachers and making agreements with them about improvement etc. serious, then this model of “not – inspecting individual people” is to be kept in place – perhaps with some adaptations like in Ireland and Wales. But if the management in schools does not do that staff – assessment strictly and seriously enough, inspectorates will have a problem. Because of course often a more or less negative evaluation of “the learning and teaching” or “the pedagogical climate in the school” has immediately to do with a general lack of professionalism of teachers that can be combated with focussed in – service – training, better coaching, and better coordination between grades and between classes. But if only a few teachers are really bad and if the management sees no chance to do something... ; the inspectorate cannot go home with a report that “the teaching in general is ok – with some exceptions”... and leave the situation as it is. The complaints reaching the inspectorates about individual teachers, show that the feeling of “the public” is that “somebody” must do something... It will be clear that an inspection of individual teachers or managers is not compatible with the present function – balance of the inspection systems. One of the functions is to present a “mirror” that has to inspire new developments in schools and the threat of an individual assessment – with – consequences will damage the basis for that improvement function severely. So, another solution has to be found. One idea – that I have

discussed incidentally (see Bruggen, Johan van, 2007) - perhaps could be the following model: in the situation that the inspectorate has found – also in a repeated inspection - that this type of staff – management is not good enough in a school (and that judgement of course has consequences for action with and by the management of the school!) a special branch of the inspectorate or a separate institution could come into action in order to do the assessment of individual teachers that apparently the management of the school has not done.... After this inspection and an eventual follow – up - action of the board of governors of the school or another authority the (eventually new) management of the school is able to introduce usual elements of this staff – management, assessment of teachers included. Perhaps also other solutions could be developed. But I assume that the problem as such will show up stronger in the near future.

Still one remark; if there is a clear local or regional authority with this task and responsibility (Local Authorities in the UK, Académie in France, Schulaufsicht in German countries) this task of coping with weak or bad teachers belongs to them; and if the inspectorate has to inspect the authority – like in the UK – the circle is also closed.

h. The inspection of non – state schools.

In some countries this issue is not a problem at all: non – state schools are inspected in the same way and against the same framework as state – run schools (the terminology is a problem here; with “non – state schools” I mean all schools that are not established and run by the state or by the local authority but by more or less private associations; and that are subsidized by the state for a larger part of their costs). Some profiles report about specific arrangements: Denmark, Norway, England, and others. But it is not very clear how far these inspections go into the real teaching and learning and into the ethos or pedagogy in these schools. And of course: these are the issues that were and are important for the founders. There seems to be a tendency to stay away from these sensible issues and that trend of course fits into the general trend to leave these things to the autonomy of the schools. But the reverse side of course is that this “staying away” contributes to the questions about the value of the inspections. Combined with the growing position of “non – state” education in some countries – denominational or on the basis of certain philosophies like the ideas of Petersen, Dewey or... – I suppose that in some countries the inspection of these schools will become an issue of political and societal discussion – taking into account of course that they work with public money and have to be accountable for that use as are publicly - run schools. In that discussion forms of inspection like in the Danish situation could be helpful: right of parents to inspect, rights or duties to elect one or more inspectors from a set of state - certified inspectors but with the possibility to find

“congenial” inspectors who understand and share the ideology of the school.

A FINAL REMARK: the history of several inspectorates is very interesting. I have learned that our predecessors often were very tough defenders of the Enlightenment – ideas about the people’s emancipation. Improvement of education stood in that line. They wanted to see all children having the best education possible and plead for that with authority and conviction and power and expertise. They have attained much if you read about Scottish or French or Irish inspectors in the nineteenth century or about Dutch inspectors in that period. That drive is still important and I have the impression that the impatience to bring real improvement in the learning and teaching is growing. The trends that I sketched have to do with that impatience. Therefore the question about the impact of our inspection work is vital and will become more vital in the coming period. Of course I do hope that SICI as an association can make a difference in this drive towards excellence of inspection work with a good impact on the improvement of learning and teaching.

12. Annexes.

Annex I: About inspection in Germany and Switzerland and Austria.

Only five German inspectorates are members of SICI. But all 16 Länder of Germany now have now an inspectorate with tasks that are comparable with what inspectorates in Europe are doing now. The same is true in many kantons of Switzerland. In Austria discussions about this type of school inspections have been held for more than 12 years but until now a real political decision has not been taken, although in some of the nine Austrian Bundesländer some experiments with school inspection have been done.

In preceding paragraphs I have already mentioned the specific German (and Austrian) situation with the Schulaufsicht. And I have mentioned the promising solutions that have been found for a good working relationship between the schools as such in their growing autonomy, the inspectorate, and the Schulaufsicht. In kantons like Zurich and Luzern these solutions are comparable, although the governance of schools in Switzerland differs from the systems and traditions in Germany.

In 2008 some publications about the “state of external evaluation by inspectorates” in Germany appeared. An important contribution is the work of Döbert, Rürup and Dederich of the DIPF (Deutsches Institut für Pädagogische Forschung – www.dipf.de) with a Germany – wide investigation about what and how inspectorates are doing now. (German – reading readers can find some of these publications via www.dipf.de or via www.kultusministerkonferenz.de . On this site of the Coordination Commission of the 16 Ministries of Education one may find entries and links to all ministries and via these to all inspectorates; often there some extra studies are mentioned). Interesting contributions at a conference on March 7 and 8 in Eisenach about evaluation and inspection may also be

found on www.dgbv.de (See also Schnell, Herbert (2008). The interesting study of Herbert Schnell (2006; only in German) about the example of Hesse and the changes in the Schulaufsicht towards a system of school inspection (see the profile of the IQ in Hesse for actual information) is a very good case – study about the typical German situation.

Armin Lohmann, director in the Ministry of Education of Lower Saxony and one of the promoters in Germany of the link between school autonomy, school development, school - self –evaluation, and external inspections, delivered a summarizing presentation at a stock – taking conference in Bonn, 14 November 2008. From his presentation I take (with his permission) some interesting facts:

- 1 All 16 Länder now have a system of external inspections of schools.
- 2 The proportion of schools that has been inspected in these Länder varies from ca 5 % to ca. 85 %.
- 3 In 2013 all schools in Germany will have been inspected at least one time.
- 4 In 2010-2011 second rounds of inspection will begin in some Länder.
- 5 Reports of the inspection go – in all Länder - to the schools. In most cases to the heads and it is left to the head to distribute the report among wider audiences. The reports go also to the Schulaufsicht; in some Länder also to the school – boards (these Schulträger in most cases are local or provincial governments; in some cases also private foundations or associations – sometimes denominational). In most Länder the reports are not public in print or on sites, although schools sometimes send them to parents or publish them on their own website.
- 6 Reports always give a list of strong points of schools and also a list of points for improvement.
- 7 The trend is that Länder oblige schools to come to an agreement (Vereinbarung) with the Schulaufsicht about what to do and when (see above). Although some Länder do this only for schools with serious problems of which the inspectorate has announced that they will be re - inspected in rather short term.
- 8 The frequency varies from 3 to 6 years, in most Länder it is 4 years.
- 9 Annual Reports are available now in Bavaria, Berlin, Schleswig – Holstein, Brandenburg, Lower – Saxony. For some other Länder (a.o. Hesse, Northrhine – Westphalia) these may be expected in 2009.

- 10 Lohmann reports that it is remarkable that in these Monitoring Annual Reports key problems are: the professionalism of teachers, the management of schools, and the quality assurance and management.
- 11 Very interesting is that 11 of the 16 Länder have compared and adapted their inspection frameworks. Now all these Länder inspect in all schools six quality aspects:
- o the learning results ((“Ergebnisse und Erfolge”),
 - o the teaching and learning (“Lernen und Lehren“),
 - o the ethos and culture (“Schulkultur”),
 - o the management of the school (“Schulmanagement”),
 - o the professionalism of the teachers (“Lehrerprofessionalität”),
 - o the school development (“Ziele und Strategien der Schulentwicklung”).
- For these aspects indicators have been formulated. These are not exactly the same in all 11 Länder, although there is much overlap.
- 12 Lohmann states that in all inspectorates inspectors need stricter guidelines and criteria for their professional behaviour.
- 13 Eight Länder have – in a consortium – adopted the standardized system for self – evaluation of schools SEIS (www.das-macht-schule.de) (see above) with the intention to coordinate their external evaluation of schools in a proportional way with the self- evaluation in the schools that are inspected.

So, the general conclusion may be that in Germany the development of Inspectorates is in line with the development in other parts of Europe. In some German inspectorates one can find very interesting details about procedures and instruments but it goes too far now to dwell on these. A lot of information may also be found in Döbert, Rürup and Dederling (2008)

As indicated above, the development in Switzerland is parallel. There is an association of German – speaking Kantons where inspectorates are starting. The biggest are in Zurich and Luzern; some Kantons are so small that they have only some 40.000 inhabitants and have to cooperate with other Kantons in matters of schooling and of course also in inspection. Several Swiss kantons have a strong tradition of the last 15 years in self – development without steering from “above”. This self –consciousness of teachers fits into the strong local – governance features in education and in many kantons there has been and still is a rather strong resistance against inspection. The working party is the ARGEV

(Interkantonale Arbeitsgemeinschaft Externe Evaluation von Schulen; for German – reading readers: www.argev.ch). ARGEV is a member of SICI now. There are now some 15 German – speaking kantons with smaller or bigger institutions or groups for external inspection work, most of them only very recently. (In total Switzerland has some 7,5 million inhabitants in 26 kantons). For German – reading readers: the website of the Zurich inspectorate (www.fsb.zh.ch) gives a lot of information, also about the framework – that is rather similar with the general lines in Europe. Zurich now – after two years of inspection – published its first Annual Report spring 2009.

Annex II: The format for the profiles.

1. A summary profile of the Inspectorate (of country X) .
2. The Education System.
 - 2.1. Structure, tables, numbers.
 - 2.2. Description.
3. The Tasks, Responsibilities and Roles of the Inspectorate – general statements.
 - 3.1. Legal basis; description in official documents.
 - 3.2. Mission statement.
 - 3.3. Which organizations and practices are inspected except schools?
4. Full Inspection of Schools as a Task of the Inspectorate.
 - 4.1. General description.
 - 4.2. The main aspects of quality to be inspected.
 - 4.3. The inspection process.
 - 4.4. Practical organization.
 - 4.5. Reporting with a judgement about the school's quality and the possible consequences.
 - 4.6. Full inspection of non – public schools.
5. Inspection of the School's Self – Evaluation.
 - 5.1. Obligation of schools concerning quality assurance and improvement.
 - 5.2. Standpoint of the inspectorate about the inspection of school – self –

evaluation.

5.3. Practice.

5.4. Reporting on the school's self – evaluation and possible consequences.

6. Inspection of particular Themes of Quality.

6.1. General position.

6.2. Examples of particular themes or topics.

6.3. Processes and methods in thematic inspections.

6.4. Inspection of staff.

6.5. The judgement about themes, topics and staff and its possible consequences.

7. Advisory Tasks of the Inspectorate.

7.1. Areas and Tasks.

7.2. Practices.

8. Other Tasks of the Inspectorate.

8.1. Curriculum development.

8.2. Data bases.

8.3. Examinations.

8.4. Handling complaints.

8.5. Financial or staff management of schools or districts.

9. Risk – Based Evaluation.

10. Reports of Inspectors.

10.1. Kinds of reports.

10.2. Target audiences.

10.3. Confidential or public.

- 11. Structure, Position, Staff and Budget.
 - 11.1. Structure.
 - 11.2. Position.
 - 11.3. Staff and budget
- 12. Recruitment and Training of Inspectors.
 - 12.1. General remarks.
 - 12.2. Recruitment conditions.
 - 12.3. Training.
 - 12.4. In - service – training.
- 13. Evaluation of the Inspectorate.
 - 13.1. Internal.
 - 13.2. External.
 - 13.3. Consequences.
- 14. Developments, prospects.
 - 14.1. Developments.
 - 14.2. Prospects.
 - 14.3. Other areas of inspection.
 - 14.4. Other remarks.
- 15. Information: website, liaison - contact, links.
- 16. References.

Annex III: Some literature.

As indicated in paragraph 2 about the restrictions of this paper this is not a usual scientific study with a good literature research and discussion. Here and there in the paper I have mentioned some sources that were – in my opinion – relevant. These sources are listed here (group a). But I also mention some other sources for further study or orientation; about inspection and about school development (group c). In group b I mention some sources about impact research on inspection of schools. I do this without any pretention of completeness or coverage. And of course with the bias of languages

that I can understand, which is a serious problem because in Eastern – European or Northern – European languages – not to mention Spanish and Italian – of course a lot of interesting publications about inspection work and relevant issues must exist. With three or four exceptions I do not mention reports of workshops of SICI or other reports of SICI, because all readers of this paper can easily consult these when they want to compare certain statements here with these experiences.

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