



EUROPEAN SCHOOLS Board of Governors meeting (4-7 Dec 2018)
Summary of main points of interest

Dear parents,

this summary is produced by Interparents (IP) and intended to keep you up to date with recent developments and proposals submitted to the European Schools Board of Governors (**BoG**) meeting held in Brussels on 4-7 December 2018.

Proposals to increase the **attractiveness of the European Schools for teaching staff** – seconded as well as locally recruited – which are much needed and overdue in our view, take prominence.

Particular attention is also given to **BREXIT** and its possible consequences for our schools, and to the recent attempts at alleviating the problem of **overcrowding at the four European Schools in Brussels**.

Other important issues are the state of implementation of the **new marking scale** as well as one aspect of the 2018 European Baccalaureate Report issued by the Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools (**OSGES**): it presents a new table for the calculation of the administration costs for the BAC exams between the 13 European Schools and the Accredited European Schools (**AES**).

Finally, this summary also covers some other important new developments regarding **Educational Support and Inclusive Education**.

I. Proposals to increase the attractiveness of the European Schools for teaching staff – seconded and LRTs.

European Schools are facing more and more problems recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers.

These questions were raised at the highest level of OSGES and the European Commission and discussed in the “Enlarged presidency working group”, which is composed of representatives of the Commission, the current Greek presidency of the BoG, Estonia, Germany, Spain, France & Croatia.

The different proposals were presented to the Board of Governors who agreed on a subset to be analysed in more detail and presented back to them when they next meet in April.

The Enlarged Presidency group analysed the situation and presented the BoG with 4 problematic areas:

- posts which require English native speakers,
- nursery and primary posts mainly in Luxembourg and Germany,
- posts requiring a math and/or science profile,
- posts in Luxembourg (seconded and locally recruited).

Proposals related to Seconded Teachers:

The percentage of teaching staff has been declining over the past years which has been one contributing factor to the budget pressures on the European school network. The fall is attributed to the cost sharing agreement as well as challenges faced by some Member States in finding suitably qualified teachers to second. There is an added issue for those member states for whom the seconded teachers salaries are lower or similar to their own national teacher salaries (mainly DE and LU).

After discussion of several options the BoG mandated the working group to prepare a concrete proposal for the April meeting for a seconded teacher salary reform that would not negatively impact on the remuneration of seconded staff members, yet grant that each seconded staff member would receive a minimum monthly 'European remuneration' on top of their national salary. In addition the BoG mandated the Office of the Secretary General to review the longer-term feasibility of introducing a daily allowance (END) based model.

There were two other proposals which the BoG mandated the working group to analyse and present back in April: to provide a legal framework for prolongation of the length of secondment to 12 years as well as a legal framework for multiple secondments.

Proposals related to locally hired teachers: In some locations, notably Luxembourg, Frankfurt and Karlsruhe, the LRT salaries are below market rates. To tackle this, OSGES has suggested a mechanism for a locally adapted salary for LRT, which is at least as high as that offered by state schools in the same location ie market competitive. After some discussion the BoG mandated the WG to analyse further and present a proposal in April with the objective of aligning the salaries of LRT to competing national schools.

In an effort to ensure that the LRT positions are attractive the BoG also mandated the WG to present concrete proposal on establishing permanent posts for LRT for functions requiring native EN teachers as well as opening up middle management positions to LRT.

II. Cost-sharing - new model discussed.

The current mechanism of cost-sharing has resulted in the overall reduction of seconded teachers. Currently 1351 teachers are recruited through secondment—i.e. only 57 % of the total on an FTE basis. In order to improve the situation, the BoG has set a target to reach 1500 teachers through secondment—i.e. 70% of the total. This should be achieved by increasing the quota of expected seconded teachers from each Member State. A decision on this proposal is expected at the April 2019 BoG.

Interparents expressed its concern about the possibility that the new cost sharing mechanism may lead to an increase in the number of non-native teachers in schools. IP would like to encourage Member States to opt for the alternative financial commitment in the event that suitably qualified teachers with the appropriate language level are not available to second. IP pointed out the importance of the regulation regarding the minimum language level requirements (as approved by the BoG in Tallinn earlier this year) and asked the BoG representatives to make sure that the Administrative Boards of all European Schools receive a report of compliance or non-compliance with the above regulation on an annual basis, and that a consolidated report is presented to the BoG every year.

III. Brexit¹ - impact on the European Schools

OSGES presented the current state of play with regards to Brexit and how it might impact the European schools. The UK delegation expressed the view that the most likely scenario was the UK leaving with a withdrawal agreement where the UK will be bound by the Convention until the end of the transition period.

In the event of a Brexit without agreement (“no-deal” exit), according to the interpretation of OSGES, the UK will still be bound by the Convention until 31 August 2020. This includes secondments, inspectors and Bac recognition.

However, in such a scenario, the accreditation of the AES school in Culham would be at risk immediately on 31 March 2019. OSGES urged the BoG to find a solution for the cohorts currently in S6 and S7 in Culham.

Interparents suggested that, in the case of no-deal, the Working Group on Brexit should be given as broad as possible mandate to find practical solutions for the schools, teachers and students at Culham. Article 31.2 of the Convention would provide the legal basis for that.

¹ The possibility of the withdrawal of the Brexit was not considered because the discussion preceded the Judgment of the Court of Justice of 10 December 2018.

IV. New marking system - German equivalence table and communication to Member States

The discussion focussed on the recent modification of the conversion table of the marks applied in Germany for students seeking admission in their universities, which was met with criticism by parents and some delegations.

The Central Office plans to send a letter to all Member States informing them about the revision of the assessment system of the European Schools.

Interparents requested that the content of the letter should first be discussed in the Bac observatory Working Group, in the context of the adaptation of the Bac rules to the new assessment system.

V. Educational Support and Inclusiveness - key reports released

The BoG examined two important documents:

a) Evaluation report on the implementation of the Educational Support Policy in the European Schools

b) Report on Inclusive Education in the European Schools

OSGES is considering hiring a coordinator for these matters. The post will be proposed to the BoG in April.

The delegations expressed their approval for the afore-mentioned documents and their recommendations.

The BoG welcomed the reports and mandated the Educational Support Policy WG to provide a single draft action plan for both reports, identifying priorities, timeline, and financial impact for their implementation.

VI. Situation of the European Schools in Brussels - status of fifth school and Berkendael and proposal for temporary site at Arts-Loi

The Secretary General informed the BoG on the measures proposed by the Belgian authorities to address the present situation of overcrowding of the European schools in Brussels:

- The creation of a fifth school in the location formerly occupied by NATO (in Evere). The site would be ready as from September 2024.

- Berkendael would become a permanently available site for the European Schools
- A temporary site, with a capacity for 1 000 students, currently used by the Belgian Ministry of Finance and located in Rue du Commerce/Arts-Loi

According to the Belgian authorities, this temporary site is the only solution available for September 2020. From a logistical perspective, the site is considered generally appropriate for S6 and S7 students, but a feasibility study needs to be concluded before any decision can be taken. Parents expressed serious concerns about the project (i.e. lack of sport and educational facilities, need to commute teachers and transport issues for those living far from the center of Brussels) and requested to be actively involved in the decision-making process already at this stage. Teachers would also like to be involved. Some Member States also expressed concerns and asked for clarifications about the project.

7. Accredited European Schools - expansion of the system and contribution to costs

Two new general interest files for accreditation were presented and favourably received (Paris La Defence, France and Templin, Germany).

Given the rapid growth of Accredited schools, they are expected to make a fair contribution to the general costs of the Central Office. Member States could agree on that principle but the details of the actual allocation of costs still needs to be worked out. A final decision is expected by April 2019.

Interparents expressed the view that whilst the proposed cost allocation for AES was a step in the right direction, it did not go far enough to ensure that all costs were appropriately attributed across all schools in the network.

Do not hesitate to contact your school's parent association and/or Interparents delegate if you would like more information on any of these topics.

Sincerely,

Pere Moles-Palleja (President, Interparents)
Helen Valentine (Vice President, Interparents)