



## **Administrative Board Meeting/Réunion du Conseil d' Administration**

**Brussels Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

**Teams Video Meeting: 12:30-14:33**

**Present:** Cerasela Botoroaga, Stephanie Buus, Marianna Cosco, Mariana Ghitoi, Angela Guarino, Yannick Hartstein, Nadia Kichaout, Maria Koidu, Dan Nicolae, Josephine Norris, Victoria Petrova, Dana Adriana Puia Morel, Adja Awa Sissoko, Pénélope Vlandas, Diane Werhert.

**Excused:** Nicholas Costello, Romina Garbi, Karim Kettani, Vladas Kukulskis, Jane Okafor, Iulian Vasile.

**Proxy:** Nicholas Costello and Karim Kettani to Stephanie Buus, Romina Garbi to Marianna Cosco, Vladas Kukulskis, Jane Okafor and Iulian Vasile to Diane Werhert, Nadia Kichaout and Josephine Norris to Pénélope Vlandas from 1:30 pm, Angela Guarino to Marianna Cosco until 12:58 pm.

**Guest:** Manuela Pamio, Secretariat of APEEE and, Eric Rega, the Director of the APEEE of Brussels IV.

### **Minutes 7.04.2022**

The quorum is reached. Ms Buus chairs the Administrative Board meeting.

#### **1. Adoption of the agenda.**

Adopted.

#### **2. Approval of the Board Minutes from March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.**

Postponed.

#### **3. Sources of funding for refugees.**

Ms Norris recalls that during the ad hoc meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022, the APEEE Administrative Board discussed options for providing funding/financial support for Ukrainian refugee children admitted to the EEBIV. As a result, the Administrative Board decided to examine existing non-service funding structures (Social Fund/Community Fund/Somerfesto) as well as the practicalities of setting up an ad hoc funding structure (parent donations).

Ms Norris prepared a note for today's meeting that summarizes the procedures/rules for using the existing funds with the balance of the accounts, the practical implications of opening a new bank account and identifies some of the issues that could arise if the Board decides to establish a mechanism to provide funding for Ukrainian refugee families.

Before presenting the various options, she thanks the Director of the APEEE for his update on the current balance of the accounts for the Social Fund, the Community Fund, the Somerfesto and the General Affairs. It is explained that the General Affairs account is mentioned because the Apeee membership

fee must be paid by all users of the APEEE services and there is now a positive balance of these non-service accounts. The discussion focuses on procedures/rules for use of existing funds. The Social Fund is governed by a set of rules and the financial assistance is provided to individual families or to the other members of the school community in the event of social hardship.

It is pointed out that Ukrainian families would be eligible applicants because Ukrainian refugee children are hosted by parents of the EEBIV and school staff members, but the application procedure for accessing the Social Fund would need to be revised. It is clarified that the financial situation of Ukrainian families is distinct from that of the host families. Individual families or members of the school community must normally provide all supporting documents in order to receive financial assistance from the Social Fund. According to Ms Vlandas, we should revise the Social Fund rules regarding the supporting documents and accept the attestation that you are registered as Ukrainian refugee in the Belgian State as justification.

Ms Kichaout raises some questions about what type of costs should be covered and if there should be a limitation or cap on scope or an amount. The Social Fund is normally dedicated to support IT equipment (for example BYOD), mandatory school trips, school transport, school canteen and other costs. The Community Fund is also governed by a separate set of rules and the distribution of funds is overseen by the Community Fund Committee. This committee can approve projects up to 750€ and make recommendations to the APEEE Board to approve financing of projects. The purpose of this fund is very broad. The Community Fund may contribute to projects and events that enhance school life and this would not exclude a fund to support Ukrainian refugee families currently hosted at EEBIV. The Somerfesto account is not governed by a separate set of rules. There is a need to keep a positive balance on the account in order to have a startup fund to organize this annual school party. Somerfesto is designed to be break-even or profit making. In previous years, the profits have been distributed to charities or to the Community Fund. With regard to the opening of a new bank account to allow donations from parents, the Director of the APEEE explains that it is possible to open an additional and separate bank account, but the opening of any bank account incurs charges. Mr Rega recommends allowing or accepting donations into an existing account that can be identified in the accounting system.

Ms Puia Morel points out that the Community Fund is typically used to fund projects and suggests that the Social Fund be used as a source of funding for refugees instead. Ms Vlandas is not in favour of opening specific bank accounts, but if there are no funds in the Social Fund we should transfer funds from the General Affairs account to the Social Fund, amend the rules of the Social Fund, in particular for the supporting documents, and use this fund. She refers that it is essential that those families apply for the funds as soon as possible, ideally after the Easter holidays, and we provide our support quickly. According to Ms Norris, the Social Fund is a better candidate than the Community Fund for funding school-related expenses, but if we need to cover a broader range of expenses, we need to have a clear mandate from the Board. Before we change rules and principles, it is important that all Board members understand what we are talking about. In addition, it is very important to inform all parents that funds are available for these purposes as soon as possible. It is agreed to move ahead and use the Social Fund to fund the Ukrainian refugees admitted to the EEBIV. At the moment, there are 12 Ukrainian refugee students who are temporarily admitted to the EEBIV until the end of the school year. In May, the Board of Governors should decide on the temporary admission of Ukrainian refugee students for the following academic year. It seems that the intention is not to welcome these students in the event of class duplication.

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
01 CA 7/04/2022	To stick the mandate of the Social Fund quickly.	The Board	ASAP

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
02 CA 7/04/2022	To inform the Ukrainian families that Social Fund can be used.	Apeeee/School	ASAP

### 3. Language test for new enrolments.

Ms Vlandas refers that this year, some EEBIV families had language test requested for their third child but not for their first two. They were asking for the section of language spoken by one of the parents. In the other European Schools based in Brussels, there is an unspoken agreement between schools that a language test is not required for pupils when parents request the language section spoken by one of the parents. When there is a doubt of a dominant language, the Director of the school of the first choice of the parents is entitled to request a language test.

Ms Vlandas and Ms Kichaout had an online meeting with Mr McGrath, the Deputy Head for Nursery and Primary cycles, on this topic. They explained the reasons for doing a language test: first to make the kid confident because kids need to have a certain level of language proficiency to be able to join the language section, and second because historically, some sections such as, the French and English sections, were populated by non-French-speaking and non-English-speaking students. Mr McGrath reassured them that he would apply the rule as best as he could, and the aim was not to separate siblings from school sites and put some siblings in one section and other siblings in another section. In the event that two languages are good enough, they will give preference to the language section chosen by the parent. Mr McGrath agreed to talk with the other Directors of European Schools in Brussels in order to have a harmonized approach on this matter and avoid that some parents in the future applying to other European schools in Brussels rather than Laeken because there are no language tests.

### 4. Finalization of the recruitment procedure for the canteen manager's position.

Mr Nicolae previously shared with the Board the evaluation grid related to the recruitment of the next canteen manager. He announces that the selection process is over and asks the Board to formally approve the Selection panel's choice and appoint Mr Evangelos Pilatos as the new canteen manager.

**Vote:** *Does the Administrative Board agree with the panel proposal to appoint Mr Evangelos Pilatos as the new canteen manager?*

- Unanimously in favour

The Administrative Board unanimously agrees to recruit Mr Evangelos Pilatos as the new canteen manager. Mr Pilatos should start working on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
03 CA 7/04/2022	To send the letter of intention to Mr Pilatos.	Eric Rega	ASAP

Mr Nicolae asks the Board how to deal with hypothetical conflicts in the selection panel. The President of the APEEE emphasizes the importance of discussing the various expectations and perspectives on roles, both individually and collectively, and figuring out how to create an understanding and synergy between each other. Ms Vlandas suggests that the Executive Committee may better define the role of the VP for Administrative Affairs and the service managers in the future.

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
04 CA 7/04/2022	To clarify and define the roles of the selection panel in order to avoid potential misunderstandings and conflicts in the future.	The Executive Committee	At the next Executive Committee meeting

## 5. Locally Recruited Teachers.

Last Wednesday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, locally recruited teachers at European schools staged a protest to demand better job security and contracts protected by the EU employment laws. Ms Kichaout identifies two actions that our parents' association could take in support of this category of teachers and seeks the Board's opinion on this. The first action is to issue a formal statement from the APEEE in support of the locally recruited teachers and the changes that need to be made to their working conditions. The second action is to sign or support a petition that is currently being circulated among the four Brussels European schools.

Ms Vlandas is in favour of sending out the petition through the class representatives and suggests we think about how to draft the APEEE statement. It is agreed that the President of the APEEE of Brussels IV will share with the Board the petition issued by the EEBI and then the Board will take a decision on a formal statement until the next Administrative Board meeting.

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
05 CA 7/04/2022	To send out the petition via the Section/Class Representatives.	Stephanie Buus	ASAP

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
06 CA 7/04/2022	To send the formal statement in favour of the locally recruited teachers issued by the EEBI to the Board,  and then,  to discuss and take a decision on a formal statement until the next Administrative Board meeting.	Nadia Kichaout, Nick Costello (Stephanie Buus)  The Board	By the next Administrative Board meeting

## 6. CEA Meetings.

Ms Vlandas gives a quick update on two CEA (Central Enrolment Authority) meetings held last week. She informs the Board that the number of applications this year is slightly lower compared to the previous year. There will be another CEA meeting in April to see the attributions that will be proposed.

With reference to the temporary admission of Ukrainian pupils to the European schools, there are between 15 and 20 requests per school and most of these families apply for the English section and go for the French section as well.

## 7. Vetasoft presentation.

Mr Rega gives a brief overview of the Vetasoft project. The presentation is divided into three main sections: history, costs, and future developments. The total cost of this project, which began in 2017, is approximately 143.748,01€. The total amount billed to the APEEE of Brussels IV by DAO & Vetasoft companies is around 136.121,94€ which corresponds to our investments. In terms of the application's future developments, Mr Rega identifies the following steps that must be taken, for example: to read the tokens of nursery and primary pupils who are not yet in the Vetasoft system, to activate tokens during meals in order to cover the large number of students, to add 200 students who are registered in our online enrolment system to the Vetasoft system, to replace the readers with mobile phones and so on.

Ms Vlandas gives some background information by explaining that the idea behind this project was to have a unique IT system for the APEEE services (transport, canteen, and extracurricular activities) that would allow us to track the activity of each child based on their parents' enrolments. Ms Petrova adds that the rationale is about our legal responsibilities to know where kids are. It is legally important to know where kids are when they are expected to be under the responsibility of the APEEE because if children are not handed over to the right person or are lost somewhere, it is our responsibility. Therefore, the Administrative Board supported the use and the implementation of the Vetasoft access system for the benefit of the new Board members. Mr Nicolae points out that the access system is not yet operational. This project, initiated in 2017, is still in the testing phase. It could be useful to provide Mr Kettani and Ms Norris the signed contract between the APEEE and the Vetasoft company for analysis, and then to schedule a meeting and set deadlines with financial penalties in the event of non-compliance with obligations.

Ms Vlandas and Mr Hartstein kindly request a full presentation of the Vetasoft project for each service, including: what it is, what its purpose is, where we are in the implementation process, what it looks like for those that are finalised, for those that have not been completed what remains to be completed, when and at what cost?

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
07 CA 7/04/2022	To make a new Vetasoft presentation that takes into consideration all requests raised by Ms Vlandas and Mr Hartstein at today's meeting and send it out to Board members.	Eric Rega	By next Administrative Board meeting

#	Action	Owner	Deadline
08 CA 7/04/2022	To submit the contract signed between the APEEE of Brussels IV and the Vetasoft company to Mr Kettani and Ms Norris for their analysis and see what we can do about that.	Eric Rega	In the coming weeks

**8. Call for a Board/parent participant to join the Mobility Working Group that will start up with the school the first week in May.**

Mr Segers, the Deputy Director for Finance and Administration of the EEIV, contacted our parents' association and asked if we had a Board member who would be interested in participating in this new Mobility Working Group. The first meeting of the Mobility Working Group will be held on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022.

Ms Buus makes a call for volunteers by explaining that the Mobility Working Group is involved in safety and mobility issues around school. She thanks Ms Guarino who expressed interest in joining this Working Group. Ms Guarino will get in touch with the Board members in charge of services and will report back to the Board on safety and mobility issues.

**9. AOB.**

As announced in today's Newsletter, the extracurricular service will organize a Performing Arts Day on the school site on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Parents are allowed to enter on the school premises for this event.

The Board meeting ends at 2:33 pm.