

The European School System

1. Brief history of the European Schools

On 12 April 1957 the European Schools were created in Luxembourg, with the signing of the *Statute of the European Schools*, that entered into force on 22 February 1960. These Schools were created with the objective of contributing to the development of a multicultural and multilingual Europe.

The certificates and diplomas that certify the studies carried out in the European Schools are valid in the territory of the contracting parties, in accordance with the table of equivalences laid down in the Order of 4 July 1990 (BOE 9.7.90.).

The first European School was created in Luxembourg in 1953 by a group of officials of the European Coal and Steel Community, as a way of resolving the problem of how to educate their children.

Subsequently more schools were created to provide education to the children of officials of the European Economic Community (Brussels I in 1958 and Brussels II in 1976), the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) (Varese (Italy) and Mol in 1960, Karlsruhe (Germany) in 1962, Bergen in 1963 and Culham (England) in 1978), and the European Patent Organization (Munich in 1977). Brussels III was opened in September 1999.

Recently two new European Schools have been created (Frankfurt and Alicante in 2002) to satisfy the needs of the European Central Bank in Frankfurt and the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market in Alicante. There is currently a total of **12** European Schools.

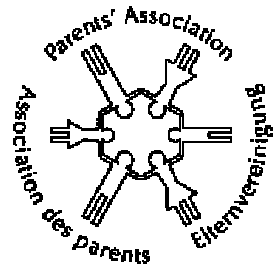
2. Educational system of the European Schools

The educational system of the European Schools is based on the principle of educating children of different nationalities and different mother tongues within an institution that is common to several countries.

These Schools have been created as state schools, which belong jointly to all the Member States. They comprise as many linguistic sections (not national sections) as official languages of the European Union, but the teaching within each section is subject to the same requirements and is based on a unified structure that governs the teaching, the timetables and the curricula.

The Certificate that the Schools awards is the European Baccalaureate. This Certificate is granted when the corresponding courses are passed and is recognized in all the Member States as being equivalent to the Upper Secondary Certificate granted by their State Schools, no matter which language section the student has attended. Non-member countries recognize the European Baccalaureate in the same way as they recognize the official certificates given by the state schools of the countries of the European Community.

To ensure that the certificate is recognized, the "curricula" are designed to satisfy the minimum requirements of each of the Member States. To promote unity within each School and friendship and cultural exchanges between the students of the different language sections.



The European Schools provide pre-University levels of education, comprising the study plans of three cycles: infant (two years), primary (five years) and secondary (seven years).

- Infant School (for children from four to six) lasts for two years;
- Primary School, five years (children from six to eleven years), and
- Secondary School, seven years (children from eleven to eighteen). Secondary School is divided into three cycles:
 - Observation (three years),
 - Pre-Orientation (two years, with six optional subjects) and
 - Orientation" (two years with fifteen optional subjects plus additional supplementary subjects that vary from School to School).

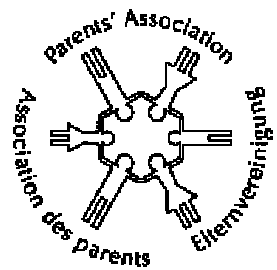
3. Structure of the European Schools

The Board of Governors is an intergovernmental body composed of the Minister of Education of each one of the Member States of the Union, or the person responsible for national education and/or cultural relations with other countries, and a member of the European Commission.

In the host Member States, the European Schools are treated as intergovernmental institutions and have the necessary legal personality for the execution of their objectives.

The system of European Schools is based on the classic model of an international and intergovernmental organization, being created by an International Treaty and by the nature and powers of the Governing Bodies of the European Schools: Board of Governors of European Schools and the Preparatory Committees. The Board of Governors designed a system of student classification, for the purpose of admission and payment of fees, with three categories:

- The first category comprises the children of officials of Community institutions and equivalent bodies, directly employed for at least one year. These children have priority for admission and are exempt from paying school fees.
- The second category comprises students covered by agreements or special decisions, each of which will specify the rights and obligations to which the students concerned are subject, with regard to financing.
- The third category comprises students not covered by the first and second categories. Such students are admitted if places are available, following an order of priorities, and they are required to pay fees.



4 Current financing

The budget of the European Schools receives its financing from several sources, as can be seen in the following table taken from the 2004 Annual Report of the Secretary General of the European Schools.

Budgetary contributions						
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Member States	€	36 031 535	38 502 554	39 870 090	41 353 093	44 655 030
	%	22.4%	20.3%	21.5%	23.3%	22.4%
European Commission	€	98 980 954	118 819 123	110 754 957	102 066 107	114 786 528
	%	61.4%	62.5%	59.8%	57.4%	57.5%
EPO	€	9 549 968	12 931 090	12 366 525	10 478 133	12 669 880
	%	5.9%	6.8%	6.7%	5.9%	6.4%
Category II fees	€	3 704 873	5 550 460	7 258 203	7 592 827	8 029 650
	%	2.3%	2.9%	3.9%	4.3%	4.0%
Category III fees	€	8 915 851	9 301 643	9 776 760	11 589 285	15 373 698
	%	5.5%	4.9%	5.3%	6.5%	7.7%
Sundry	€	3 978 270	4 941 205	5 109 555	4 650 083	3 943 123
	%	2.5%	2.6%	2.8%	2.6%	2.0%
TOTAL COSTS	€	161 161 451	190 046 075	185 136 090	177 729 528	199 457 909

For 1999 to 2001, the figures refer to real revenue, for 2002 they refer to revenue according to the provisional statement and for 2003 they refer to the allotted revenue included in the budget.

So, the sources of financing are:

- Contributions from the Member States, that:
 - continue to pay the national salaries of the staff whom they transfer to the Schools, and
 - in addition to this, the States in which the Schools are established (the host countries) should provide the Board of Governors with the school buildings, and also maintain them.
- The second source of revenue is that of the school fees paid by the students who are not children of officials of the Community or those of an equivalent status (category II and Category III).
- The temporary contribution collected from the transferred staff (as is also the case for the EU officials) goes to the School's budget.
- The contributions of the non-Community bodies with which the Board of Governors has an agreement.
- The Commission pays a subsidy to balance the budget to cover the difference between the overall expenditure of the Schools and all their other revenue.

With regard to the current way of financing the Schools, the following information should be taken into account:

- The overall percentage of Category I students is 59.99%¹, whereas the European Commission's financial contribution is only 57.5%.
- A greater concentration of Category I students can be found in the large European Schools, whereas in the small Schools the majority of students are Category III students.

¹ According to the 2004 Annual Report of the Secretary General of the European Schools.