

# **INTERPARENTS REPORT 2007-2008**

## **MAIN POINTS DISCUSSED DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2007-2008**

A lot of subjects have been discussed during the last school year; some of them will involve important changes to the European School system.

### ***Consequences of the enlargement of the European Community:***

The European School system has now been in existence for over 50 years and has had to evolve to keep pace with the changes to the European Union (EU) itself, notably the expansion to ever more Member States (MS). The European Schools (ES) were initially created to educate EU staff children and provide them with some continuity in their education when moving from one MS to another as well as facilitating their reintegration into their national systems. It is now the wish of the MS and EU institutions that the European School system should be made more widely available. To meet this wish, new types of schools (Type II, Type III) are to be created (\*See here below). The process of opening up the system is ongoing.

Interparents supports the evolution of the system towards a “European Schooling System leading to the European Baccalaureate” providing that the value of the European Baccalaureat Diploma (EBac) and consequent recognition is sustained throughout the EU. The quality of teaching must be maintained and harmonised between all the European Schools (regardless of which type). Any extension of the system should also allow for the need of existing Type 1 schools which already face overcrowding: (e.g. in Bruxelles, Luxembourg, Munich, Varese and Frankfurt) to expand and also eventually accommodate a wider range of pupils.

Last April the Board of Governors (BofG) set up a working group to look into this necessary “Reform” of the system and Interparents was invited to participate.

### ***EBac quality evaluation and teaching harmonisation:***

Unlike the International Baccalaureat (IB) provided by International Schools, the EBac enjoys a legal requirement for it to be accepted by all the Universities in all Member States of the EU. However, the EBac is also recognised worldwide on its own merits.

The broad curriculum, high level of foreign language skills and the multi-cultural education have been proven to provide students with an excellent foundation for successful study at university level. Their linguistic skills and adaptability to different cultural environments give them a real advantage when participating in Erasmus exchange programmes and in finding quality employment after graduation.

To quantify all these aspects, several studies are being officially conducted at the moment. In particular, one by an external group of experts should provide us with a comparison between the EBac and the IB as well as other national diplomas. The audit is still ongoing,

but the the results are expected this coming school year and should provide a base for a possible reform of the EBac and other adjustments if needed.

A further survey was launched last June by the General Secretary with the help of Interparents to gather information from our European School Alumini students to assess their after BAC performance. We are still waiting for the results.

### ***Difficulty in recruiting detached teachers and cost sharing:***

Two problems are making teacher recruitment more difficult.

The first is that some countries are themselves facing a shortage of teaching staff, especially in certain critical subjects and are, thus, reluctant to detach teachers.

The second problem is one of equity in facing the costs of detachment between the different MS. With the recent enlargements of the EU, the system faced a surge in the number of pupils and, inevitably, in the number of languages to be offered. A large number of children do not have their own official language section and have to join another one. These pupils mainly elect the French, German and English sections, depending on which country the school is in.

Until now the European Education system was based on teaching provided by mother tongue teachers. The combination of this principle and the sudden growth of non mother-tongue pupils in the big sections have resulted in 82% of all the money to pay detached teachers being provided by 8 countries. This has resulted in complaints that there is a problem of equity in the allocation of costs among the individual MS.

The last BofG in April proposed a “structural solution” to rebalance the cost sharing. This solution proposes basing the cost sharing on proportionality between the number of detached staff and the native pupils of each MS. However, under this proposal we also face the possibility of lessons being given by non-native speakers in some selected subjects (of course with safeguards in order to guarantee the quality of education). This proposal solicited negative reactions from some MS national delegations and Interparents. This subject will be debated in the newly created “Reform” working group (with the participation of Interparents) whose mandate is to finalise the proposals on cost sharing and submit them to the next BofG. However, the UK delegation has already made it public that it does not intend to provide teachers in Music, Art and Physical Education.

### ***Problem of language teaching:***

The working group on Languages has been opened to the parents since last January and various issues are under discussion such as : the harmonisation of teaching for LII and LIII, the introduction of non-native speaker teachers for LII, LIII, LIV, the teaching of science subjects in LII in the Secondary School, the teaching of LIII in the 1<sup>st</sup> year Secondary. These subjects are still under discussion and the working group was unable to reach a consensus. No decisions have been taken on these points for the moment.

***Other subjects and decisions:***

-The School Autonomy pilot project (see ESmunich website) is ongoing. Parents have four representatives on the School Advisory Council (SAC) of the ESM and, up to now, work with the other members of the committee (teachers, management, EPO etc.) has been made in a constructive atmosphere. We have proposed a list of subjects which we would like to discuss and they have been put on the coming agendas (*e.g. quality control of all aspects of school life, building development, child protection and hygiene, options policy, SEN policy, Intercultural exchanges...*)

-In April the BofG issued a document and guidelines to insure the protection and welfare of children in the European Schools. Inevitably, this will have practical implications at local level which will be discussed in the upcoming meetings of the SAC.

-The General rules have been amended in particular regarding the complaints procedures and appeals in case of non promotion of a pupil or disciplinary measures. *Please see [www.eursec.org](http://www.eursec.org) for further information.*

-The working group on "pedagogical issues for Interparents at the ESM", comprising representatives from the different language sections already well experienced in educational matters, has been enlarged to include all the parents' representatives of the SAC. The group aims to get together to discuss all the issues of importance to our school before the SAC and Teaching Committee meetings. The current members of the working group are: Mrs Boffin, Mr Chiozzi, Mr Coda, Mrs Crivelli-Daieff, Mr Domingos, Mrs Gonzales, Mrs Hartrampf, Mr Riegler, and Mrs Wagner. I would like to express my gratitude to them for having committed their time and for all their valuable help and advice.

*To get more information on Interparents please go to the Eltervereinigung website at [www.ev-esm.org](http://www.ev-esm.org) / click Schulisches / go to "Allgemeine Informationen - Interparents – (auf English) "*

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For **Munich European School**

\*Not all European Agencies are of a size to justify the construction of a dedicated European School. Faced with these problems, a new category of school has been created: European School Type II. These Type II European Schools must meet strict conditions before being accredited as a provider of a European schooling offering access to the "European Baccalaureat" (*based on a common curriculum with as far as possible Mother Tongue Education*) for the children of staff of European Agencies.

The teachers of these schools are recruited by the host country, mainly locally. There have also been suggestions of opening Type III European Schools. These would be national schools accredited to offer the EBac, independently of the existence of an EU agency or institution.