

## **Newsletter May 2015:**

### **Emergency situation canteen:**

Sometimes in April this year rumours started to consolidate that some observed problems “on the floor of the kitchen of the canteen” may lead to a rather heavy repair work of an old “Bauschaden”. In essence water has been found between two sealing layers of the ground floor “which should not be there”. Whilst at present there is no danger as such, there is the risk that the said water emerges to the surface of the kitchen which will then pose a hygienic problem.

After many meetings, discussions the situation worsened in that the news escalated to such an extent that:

1<sup>st</sup> “no one thinks to be liable for the damage”; and

2<sup>nd</sup> “the kitchen are (about 400sqm) might need to be closed for 8 weeks or more after the summer break (total repair time of 16 weeks)”.

All in all the contractual situation is complex (The PA is renting the canteen area from the school – the caterer is renting the canteen area from the PA) and the BIMA (office of the German state who owns the building) will do the necessary repair on their costs, but is not prepared to do more; e.g. provide any compensation for the closing time neither in terms of money nor infrastructure. The type of contract the school has with Germany is not known to us.

Writing these lines we are still in good and heavy discussions and negotiations with the management of the school, the representatives of the EPO and the caterer IICielo to find a solution which is “acceptable to all”. Nevertheless, it will be clear that at least some restrictions (to put it mildly) with respect to catering will hit us at the beginning of the next school year. There are many good and positive ideas; nevertheless a careful evaluation has revealed that some 150 to 200 K Euros of additional costs are not yet covered for maintaining an emergency catering during the maximum expected time for the repair. Certainly we will keep you informed and may even invite to an early assembly of the association in autumn.

### **Reform on the secondary school – new marking system:**

Our parent’s representatives in Interparents (the parent’s representation of all European Schools) reported on the planned introduction of a new marking system in the frame of the reform of the secondary school. Whilst the first step of the reform had been welcomed by everybody (it was the introduction of L3 already in S1), the new marking system is seen much more critical. The problem is not the system as such. In essence it will shift from the 1 to 10 scaling (with almost 60% of the possible markings being negative ones) to a system having only 5 grades A,B,C,D,E which two negative markings. Such a new system will correspond more to international standards. The change of a marking system, however, might have unforeseeable effects on the acceptance of the European Bac by many universities. In particular in countries having a rather mathematical model of calculating admittance to certain studies at university (e.g. Germany) the perceived advantages of or security provided by the old system might be gone by reopening the debate on the transformation of the markings of our BAC in A,B,C,D,E to national levels.

### **Virtual school days!**

Many of us followed the “somewhat strange discussions” with respect to the Ferienkalender of the school – we reported on it.

The major point of dissatisfaction of the last round was, among the very long summer break, the need of the school day on 23<sup>rd</sup> of December. Whilst the system of the European School seems to cease to exist if we have a day off on 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, it is no problem whatsoever to declare for a large part of the secondary school three days (01 to 03.07.2015) as being off. For those having “a problem with this” a compensation program for a part of the time is offered (see WEB-page of the school). Taking the “pedagogical day” into account it means that of from 1<sup>st</sup> of July to 6<sup>th</sup> of July there are no lessons held in the secondary, but on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July there is the last school day in order to have the obligatory 180/181 school days.

One can see a practical aspect in such “virtual school days” and conclude that also the 7<sup>th</sup> of July may fall under this category. The new electronic system allows accessing the annual report anyway online, thus there is no real need to pick up the annual report personally on that day. For more conservative parents it has even been suggested to provide some weeks in advance an empty envelope with a preferred address and sufficient postal stamps to the class teacher in order to receive a paper version of the annual report in time, if one cannot wait to pick it up in September. Similar can be applied for the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December by “meeting in a virtual class room” in order to wish a Merry Christmas!

Anyway I wish you first of all an excellent summer break!