

European School Lux 2- Mamer-Bertrange

AGENDA for the Administrative Board meeting on 22 February 2013 (translated from French)

Part 1 - with pupil representatives

1. Approval of agenda for Part 1
- Final version of minutes from meeting of 14 February 2012
3. Oral communication
4. Draft minutes of meeting of 23 October 2012
5. Follow-up on meeting of 23 October 2012
6. Agreement on date for next meeting

Part 2 - without pupil representatives

7. Approval of agenda for Part 2
8. Oral communication
9. Draft minutes of meeting of 23 October 2012
10. Follow-up on meeting of 23 October 2012
11. Inscription policy for the school year 2013-14
12. Organisation of secondary school studies: state of play for the work of the Working Group
13. School transportation
14. Report of the Court of Auditors for the year 2011-12
15. Budget estimates for revenue and expenditure for the fiscal year 2014: Annual school plan for 2014
16. Information about credit transfers
17. Status for different allocations
18. Minerval (school fees) for the school year 2012-2013:
 - revenue situation as of 1/2/2013
 - new rates for Category 3 pupils for the year 2013-14
19. Extrabudgetary accounts as of 31/12/12
20. Reconciliation of account balances
21. New recruitments of administrative and service staff and temporary staff
22. Questions raised by the representatives of the Seconded Staff: no written questions
23. Questions raised by the representatives of the APEEE: no written questions
24. Questions raised by the administrative and service staff: no written questions
25. Agreement on date for next meeting

Summary of discussions

(i) Oral communication and budgetary situation for European Schools (ES) (pt. 3)

Kivinen (Secretary General of the European School System) started out by explaining that the 2014-2020 EU Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) agreed at the European Council (but not yet approved by the European Parliament) meant that the ES was forced to find savings in the 2014 budgets. For the Luxembourg II school in Mamer-Bertrange (hereinafter Lux-II) this meant that additional cuts would have to be made to the budget

presented by the director. The latter proposed a modest overall increase compared to 2013 of 0,83% (+207 130 euro)) (see details under (vi) below).

(ii) Follow-up on issues raised by pupils (pt. 5)

The pupils' committee for Lux-II will have funds transferred from the former joint pupils' account which are held by the Lux-I pupils' committee so the Lux-II now have their own funds.

The volume of the alarm will be adjusted. It was apparently very loud and according to my daughter not a trivial matter but something that is painfully necessary to address.

The problem with the automatic window shades cannot be solved in the short term as the system does not allow for manual override. The school will however be looking into fixing the problem.

(iii) Organisation of subjects (pt. 12)

As Raoul Precht had pointed out to me, the document from the Working Group (WG) on the organisation of studies in the European Schools' secondary cycle had been put on the agenda mainly for information. Some interesting ideas, such as abolishing ICT as a separate subject and instead introduce requirements to mainstream it into the teaching of all other subjects, were briefly discussed in the meeting.

For me, the most worrying thing in the document is the recommendation to "reexamine" the definition of "language sections" (recommendation 4 in the report), which Kivinen also repeated in the meeting. This represents a potential challenge to one the founding principles of the European Schools.

Having this in mind, I used the presence of the two pupil representatives as an opportunity to get their opinion about the European School system with its language sections. I asked if they considered it an advantage compared to traditional international schools where the teaching is one vehicular language. The pupils primarily emphasized the benefits of different nationalities being taught together through vehicular languages although they also recognized the importance of being taught in their mother tongue.

It was obvious from the discussion that there are different expectations to the ES and different ideas about what the schools should be. I stressed that it is important that the schools provide appropriate schooling not only for the children who are in the schools for many years but also for those who only spent a couple of years before either returning to their home country or move on to other countries, e.g. to attend international or local schools there.

(iv) Inscription policy (pt. 11)

I brought forward the comments I had received from Sandra Vella and Stefan Wunderlich (concerning 5th par. p. 1 and the 3rd par. on p. 5). As a result, the 5th paragraph on p. 1 will be amended to reflect the fact that some pupils requesting Irish may not have English

as vehicular language. For the case where a Cat. III pupil has a sibling in the school (5th par. p.1) and want to enroll in the school this will simply not be possible if the class he/she wants to join has 24 pupils or more (at first I thought I had misunderstood this but I am afraid it is true). Having another one of Stefan's comments in mind I also asked the school to carefully consider the borders drawn on the Luxembourg City map in the annex to the draft inscription policy document and to make sure they were appropriate for maximizing enrollment into the German section. I also asked the school to carefully consider the cut-off dates for considering pupils as being 'new residents'. In the draft policy this is 1 March in the year of enrollment (6 months before school start). To lower the risk of 'manipulation' it could be considered to set this date even earlier. I mentioned also that there could be strong economic incentives for parents to live in or close to Germany due to the real estate prices there.

(v) Transportation (pt. 13)

Most of the time was spent discussing the lack of supervision at the school's bus stop area. Apparently, neither the school or ATSEE are legally speaking responsible for supervision of the area between the bus stops/platforms and the entries to the buildings. De Tournemire (DT) (The Director) explained that he had asked the Luxembourg authorities if not he could consider it being part of the school's premises but this had been rejected. Kivinen requested that this be clarified in writing. ATSEE's president offered to help find a solution, perhaps with the help of the supervisors in the Navattes. He also suggested that a solution where the parents would volunteer could be considered. I deliberately kept quiet but I frankly did not like what I heard. I intended to ask the questions to ATSEE that Stefan Wunderlich had put forward but Kivinen and DT insisted that it was not the right forum to discuss these matters. I did however managed to learn that parents should call ATSEE's own office or the bus company if buses do not arrive as scheduled. We should set up a meeting with ATSEE where we can ask all the questions we have (e.g. on supervision, who to contact if there are irregularities in the service).

DT insisted several time that his direct responsibility when it comes to transportation ended with the production of the mobility plan. From a legal point of view he is probably right. Fortunately it does not mean that he does not want to engage with us, ATSEE or the Luxembourg authorities to help find solutions.

Concerning the security on the train platform, help came from the representative of the Luxembourg Ministry of Education, who recommended that the ES should send a letter to the Ministry of Transportation and CFL copied to the Ministry of Education, stressing that it is the only platform in Luxembourg serving two schools, one of which is attended by very small children (under 12 years old) (where express trains pass by without slowing down).

The Commission's staff association has arranged an information meeting with ATSEE and DT for EU institutions on Tuesday which I have been invited to. I will forward the details to you and let you know how it went [As it turned out, I was unfortunately unable to attend].

(vi) Budget and annual school plan 2014 (pt. 15)

The school is being asked to shave 1,2 million euro off its 25,1 million euro budget proposal. Most of this (1 million euro) will come from a recalculation of the total salary costs (under chapter 1) due to a higher than expected drop in the salaries for seconded teachers. The school will however still have to find savings of some 200,000 euro from chapters 2, 3 and 7 without reducing the SEN budget of 442,734 euro (budget line 7 100). The cuts are likely to be concentrated under the budget lines 3 005 (ICT equipment for teachers) and 7 001 (informatics).

DT expressed some frustration about the school's stretched human resources. To illustrate this he said that the school compound has six entries but only five guards to cover them. One of the entries (for staff and teachers) is therefore not guarded but can only be opened with a badge. Another example is the fact that the sheer size, complexity and security requirements in the swimming arena mean that one person is tied to the location full time. DT also mentioned the fact that the lack of staff available at the medical clinic means that the presence of a nurse at all times cannot be guaranteed.

Discussing teaching materials, DT explained that he would shortly propose new arrangements for the payment of photo copies according to which parents would be asked to pay one amount to the school every year based on an estimate (likely to amount to some 10-20 euro). We welcomed this.

(vii) Minerval (pt. 18)

The Commission representative and Kivinen actually tried to make the case that the rule that there cannot be different rates at the two schools could be interpreted in such a way that if they could get us to agree to a 25% increase they could go back to Lux-I and tell them that they needed an increase of 25% rather than 20% or that they could somehow talk them into meeting halfway and agree to 22,5%! The Commission representative therefore made tried to convince the participants that the parents in Luxembourg were particularly privileged which I then had to reject in the strongest possible terms while referring to struggling parents that I know of who will soon have four children in Cat. III. Fortunately, Birgitte Holst and I were backed by DT, the representative of the Administrative and Service Staff and one of the teachers' representatives in the final vote. The final result of the vote was therefore 5-3 in favor of the lowest possible (20%) increase.

(viii) Oral questions from APEEE (pt. 23)

I asked if the school had a budget to carry out the satisfaction survey referred to in the annual plan (p.6). Roberto Stabile and I worked extensively with DT in a Working Group before the summer and we got offer from a German consultancy which was unfortunately too expensive. DT said that there would be some money available for a survey in 2013. I spoke with him after the meeting and we agreed that we should identify an amount that would not be seen as unreasonable by our stakeholders (significantly less than 20,000 euro covering a survey every three years). I also asked the Commission representative if she could perhaps help us identify a firm (e.g. a framework contractor) working with the

Commission on a regular basis on such matters. She asked me to remind her in an email [Still to be done].

I also asked Kivinen if the Minerval had been set taking the full operating capacity of the schools into consideration and if they would evaluate the effect of 20% increase and give the school discretion to lower the minerval if there would be a significant drop in enrollments. He said that they had only assessed the appropriateness of the price level at the overall and not the individual school level. He said that they would monitor the situation but said that the schools would not have authority to adjust the fee levels.

(ix) Talk over lunch

I was sitting next to Kivinen during lunch and had a chance to get some feedback from him about the UK government's decision not to second teachers to the ES anymore. His feedback suggested that this is not yet a done deal. Apparently the UK could significantly reduce the number of teachers it seconds to the ES system and still respect the letter of the ES convention.

Kivinen also informed me about the plans for a ES in Copenhagen, which will be established in cooperation with a school very well known for its educational programs in the field of music, Sankt Annæ Gymnasium. If they manage to put a deal together I believe both the ES and Sankt Annæ could benefit greatly from this. One of the stumbling blocks is apparently that Sankt Annæ's programs involves a lot of travel and concerts which may be difficult to combine with the ES curriculum and approach.

He informed me that the ES secretariat had decided to switch to the Commission's financial management system, ABAC, which is based on SAP. A solution they had chosen after failing and spending a lot of money on developing their own system. This mirrors the experiences and eventual choices of several of the EU some 40 agencies.

(x) Timetabling and choices

After lunch Birgitte Holst and I were invited for a presentation of the outcome of the analysis of the S6 choices 2013-2015. The analysis had been carried out by Sabine Bouzette who presented the results to us. Out of 138 pupils, 78 (56,5%) were able to get the combination they had requested. 28 (20,3%) had asked for combinations where one course could not be established, while 22 (15,5%) had asked for combinations where there would be a clash for one of the courses. For four pupils one course chosen could not be established, while for another there was a clash. For two pupils two courses requested could not be established, while for three pupils two courses clashed. Finally, for one pupil one course chosen could not be established while there was a clash for two other choices.

Ms Bouzette will contact the 60 pupils who could not get the combination of choices initially requested tomorrow and set up meetings with them. The deadline for submission of the second application will be 5 March. The final list of choices will be circulated for verification on 10 March.

Johannes Madsen
President of APEEEL2