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Tallinn European Schooling – General Interest File

Board of Governors of the European Schools

Meeting in Oxford on 18, 19 and 20 April 2012

OPINION OF THE JOINT BOARD OF INSPECTORS (NURSERY, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY)

At its meeting of 7 February 2012, the Joint Board of Inspectors scrutinised and took note of the General Interest File presented by the Estonian authorities concerning the application for the setting up of Tallinn European Schooling (type II) in Estonia, offering on the one hand, a high-quality multilingual and multicultural education meeting the needs of the staff of the European IT Systems Agency and on the other, an additional alternative for the education of expatriate children.

The Joint Board of Inspectors considers that this file meets the requirements of the first stage of the accreditation process defined at Mondorf in April 2005 and recommends that the Board of Governors should approve it.

OPINION OF THE BUDGETARY COMMITTEE

At its meeting of 13 and 14 March 2012, the Budgetary Committee took note of the General Interest File presented by the Estonian authorities concerning the application for the setting up of a type II accredited school in Tallinn, Estonia.

The Budgetary Committee considers that this file meets the requirements of the first stage of the accreditation process defined at Mondorf in April 2005 and recommends that the Board of the Governors should approve it.



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The General Interest File - Tallinn European Schooling
For information to the Office of the Secretary-General,
the Board of Governors, the Boards of Inspectors and the Budgetary Committee

Dear Deputy Secretary-General,

Regulation (EU) No 1077/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 established a European agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice. On the basis of the regulation, the seat of the European IT Agency shall be located in Tallinn and will begin its operation on 1 July 2012.

The Estonian Government has actively supported the founding of the Agency. Our aim is to provide good operational prerequisites for the Agency to facilitate its swift launch and the successful recruitment of staff. The establishment of Tallinn European Schooling is an important part of this goal.

The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research has mapped the needs and demands for developing international education in Estonia and prepared the action plan to establish Tallinn European Schooling.

The General Interest File of Tallinn European Schooling is herewith sent for your consideration. We hope that the Board of Governors of the European Schools will give this document its favourable consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Jaak Aaviksoo
Minister

Appendix (6 pages)

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USG ECOLES AGREEES

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A traiter par KK.

Cc à :

Introduction

Estonia is to host a new European Union IT agency in the area of freedom, security and justice. The seat of the EU's future IT agency will be located in Tallinn. The new agency will manage the sharing of data on security, visa applications and fingerprints of asylum seekers. The IT agency will be fully operational in 2012. The agency will begin its operation with a staff of thirty-five officials to be assigned to Tallinn by July 2012 with a further fifteen officials by December 2012. The number of staff is expected to increase to 100 employees in the next three years. The French city of Strasbourg is to remain home to the servers of the Schengen Information System, via which countries share information on police and judicial cooperation, and EU border controls.

As a part of value proposition made by Estonian government in relation to the location of future IT Agency, the establishment of Tallinn European Schooling was included in the offer package. At the first stage, the pupils will be guaranteed a place in existing schools and pre-primary education.

First and foremost the aims of the establishment of Tallinn European Schooling include the following:

- to offer a high-quality multilingual and multicultural education for the needs of the children of the staff of the European IT agency;
- to offer an additional alternative for the education of the expatriate children.

The European School would improve the educational opportunities of the children of various EU officials would make it possible for these children to return to their national educational systems or other European schools. Offering a European School-type education would also widen the variety of international education in Estonia and consequently be notably beneficial to present and future employees of multinational companies and embassies.

The establishment of the EU IT agency in Estonia is further supplemented by the Estonian Government's support for the launch of the European School type II in Tallinn. Estonia will ensure that the children of the agency's employees can study according to the European School curriculum, i.e. European Baccalaureate. The necessary budget has already been planned for the implementation of this curriculum at a school in Tallinn.

International Education in Tallinn

Estonia currently provides general education in the Estonian, Russian, English, Finnish and German languages. Study options vary in terms of basic education and secondary education. In Tallinn, it is also possible to obtain an education according to internationally recognised curricula.

Three schools in Tallinn are fully authorised by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) to offer the IB Diploma Programme: The International School of Estonia, Tallinn English College (municipal school) and Audentes Private School. At the moment only the International School of Estonia offers a comprehensive education to children aged 3 to 19 years (Pre-school to Grade 12). The whole IBO curricula will gradually be developed and fully implemented also at Tallinn English College: both the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP) will open one class per year from 2011-2014 and 2013-2017, respectively. The Estonian government has additionally supported the opening and implementation of IB programmes.

It is also possible at the secondary level to graduate on the basis of German curricula. Graduating students of Tallinn Saksa Gümnaasium (Tallinn German Gymnasium) receive German and Estonian leaving certificates. The current difficulty lies in the absence of education delivered entirely in French, though French is taught in various Estonian schools in Tallinn.

The European School in Tallinn

Legislation

The legislative basis for opening the European School curriculum has already been incorporated into Estonian education law (Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act) and a sufficient supply of finances for this type of schooling will be provided by the state. The Estonian authorities will ensure that the legislation will cover all the relevant aspects of organising a type II European School.

Tallinn European Schooling will be established by the state-owned foundation Innove, but it will be based on the law of private schools. Through this type of arrangement, the Estonian government will maintain control over the administration of the school, while allowing the school to be relatively flexible in economic matters. Foundation Innove was established to promote lifelong learning initiatives and activities through Estonian and EU programmes in the area of human resources development, but it is also a competent authority formally responsible for implementing national education and language policy in the field of primary, basic and secondary education, as well as in vocational and adult education.

At the establishment stage of the school's operations, the Ministry of Education and Research will be in charge of the administration of the school. After the establishment stage, the administration of the school will be organised by the Administrative Board of Tallinn European Schooling, which will include the representatives of pupils, parents, teachers, the school administration and the governmental bodies. Teaching in Tallinn European Schooling will be organised to facilitate study by and education of pupils from different parts of Europe. The school will hope to collaborate with IB or other schools in Tallinn to allow for the exchange of expertise and to reduce overheads through shared support services.

Educational aims and principles

The school will follow the syllabus of the European Schools, and language section(s) may, when needed, organise teaching in combined classes. The basic underlying principles of the new school will be respect and tolerance for individuals, cultures, nationalities and religions. The school will create conditions for the pupils to interact and integrate with each other. European hours (most likely from primary class 3) will help to strengthen the pupils' European and international awareness, create friendships across cultures and increase understanding of the importance of other languages.

The school aims to assist special needs pupils through a variety of support measures, according to the nature and scope of their needs. Early recognition is vital and is the basis for organising remedial teaching and special needs education for those in need of special support. These measures are aimed at promoting the integration and language learning of those pupils who do not have their own language section. Special needs education can be delivered in small groups or individually alongside other teaching. The aim is to assist and support pupils so that they may be afforded equal opportunities to complete their education in accordance with their requirements.

Pupil welfare services aim at promoting an operational culture of care, concern and positive interaction in the school community and at ensuring equal opportunities for each pupil. The objective of pupil welfare is the prevention, recognition, improvement and earliest possible elimination of obstacles to

learning, learning difficulties and other problems connected with attending school. Pupils' welfare is carried out in close co-operation with their parents/guardians. All pupils will be fully integrated in the local community and given chances to familiarise themselves with the city of Tallinn and the surrounding area, its respective organisations (other schools, universities, business life and third sector organisations) and diverse services.

The detailed curriculum will be introduced at a later stage, covering all relevant aspects related to the organisation of the school (mission, values, purpose, objectives, school structure, implementation of education, organisational culture, concept of learning, working methods, co-operation and involvement at all levels, allocation of lessons, guidance and learning support, welfare services, assessment of pupils, evaluation of the school, content of subjects taught in the school, etc.).

Number of pupils

The Tallinn European Schooling expects to host up to 120 pupils by 2015. On the basis of research conducted among the potential clientele, the estimated number of foreign pupils may reach 200. Naturally, these figures are estimates of the trends in pupil numbers in Tallinn European Schooling for this period. The school also intends to enroll pupils other than the children of IT agency employees. Estonia also hosts the trans-Atlantic alliance's cyber-defense facility. NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense COE in Tallinn serves as a proof of Estonia's competence in the field of IT, also many internationally managed companies, for example Skype.

Despite trends towards internationalisation, we believe that Tallinn European Schooling will remain a relatively small number of students, the focus of which is an English language section. However, there have been ongoing calls for a French programme, which could be developed later, depending on student numbers and demand. At present in Tallinn, international education at upper secondary level is well represented and the most urgent need is to develop more possibilities at the primary and lower secondary levels.

School structure

Tallinn European Schooling will commence its operations in autumn 2013. Teaching will first be provided in nursery, primary and years 1-3 of the secondary cycle of the European Schools system. The accredited school to be established will consist of a nursery school (2 years) for children from age 4, a primary school (5 years) for children from age 6 and a secondary school (seven years) for children from age 11. In the long term, the school aims to offer a full cycle, leading to the European Baccalaureate, but in its first year the school will open classes up to secondary year 3. The school guarantees that once a child has begun the primary or secondary cycle, the full cycle will be offered.

Languages

At the beginning the school will have an English language section. Children whose mother tongue is not English will receive extra language training to increase their proficiency in the language of the section. The opening of French and Estonian sections will also be considered, if there are sufficient numbers of pupils for establishing combined classes. First foreign language (English, French or German) L2 is in the curriculum since the first year of primary level, and it will be taught in mixed ability groups for five lessons per week, once per day. The choice is binding for the duration of the schooling.

Mother tongue programme for children without a language section (SWALS)

From its start in 2013, Tallinn European Schooling will provide various mother-tongue programmes (L1) for pupils without a language section (SWALS) within the regular curriculum for the entire nursery, primary and secondary school. The children of EU staff will receive necessary teaching independent of student numbers. The need for mother tongue teaching as well as the foreign language preferences of

the children of the IT agency's employees and others will be examined at an early date. The school will do its utmost to find a teacher of the respective language. However, if necessary, the potential of using distance learning (e.g. videoconferencing), especially in cooperation with European Schools, will be realised (most likely for secondary and upper primary classes).

Concerning the needs of category II and III pupils, it will be left to the discretion of the organiser of Tallinn European Schooling to decide what the required minimum number of pupils should be to provide mother tongue tuition (in case if not already available for children of EU staff). In the beginning, the feasibility of the school to offer additional mother-tongue programmes will largely depend on student numbers and growth. Extra mother-tongue programmes within the curriculum and in accordance with the prescribed timetable will be introduced if at least 5 children (who are not children of EU staff) with the same official European mother tongue apply. In forming a group, pupils may come from totally different age groups (in either nursery, primary or secondary).

The vision of the school is that every child is empowered to develop their own mother tongue. It is the language they use to communicate with their family and friends, it facilitates a possible rehabilitation to their home country, national school or university and it gives them access to their own culture and family background.

Staff

The director, insofar as possible, appoints or hires the teachers and other personnel of the school in close co-operation with the respective national educational authorities. However, a teacher hired provisionally or longer than one year shall be appointed by the Administrative Board. An attempt will be made to hire native teachers in the language(s) in which teaching takes place. At the secondary level, near-native (C1 level in accordance with Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) can also be considered. All the language teachers will preferably be native speakers of the language concerned. Every teacher must have a university teaching qualification or equivalent that is recognized by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research for qualified teaching at the nursery, primary or secondary level.

The teaching of languages has traditionally held a significant position in the Estonian school system. Teaching as a process of interaction requires responsibility and commitment from teachers in co-operating with pupils, parents and the school community. A teacher's job description includes continuous self-development and learning.

School premises and learning environment

The location for Tallinn European Schooling will be decided by autumn of 2012. The Estonian government will provide a school building. Though Tallinn European Schooling will act as a separate entity, it will most probably be located in the premises of an existing school, with the aim of having close collaboration in sharing rooms, infrastructure or even personnel to some extent. The selection criteria include proximity to the IT agency, physical suitability and availability in relation to the commencement of the operations. The physical learning environment consists of the school's buildings and facilities, the instructional tools and the learning materials.

In the first few years, the school building may be a temporary location depending on student numbers, actual growth and other factors.

Funding and admission

Education given in the school is free of charge for children of EU staff. The possible funding contribution of the European Commission to accredited schools for children of EU staff will be examined and agreed upon at the negotiations. This excludes additional expenses such as textbooks, other learning material and school meals. The school will be funded by the Estonian government, and an additional compulsory school fee will be paid by the parents of category II and III pupils.

Registration and enrolment for the inaugural year is possible from 1 January 2013 onwards. As a general rule, children must be registered by 1 April at the latest for the August intake in order for the school to be able to plan its programme and recruit teachers. Admittance is possible during the school year if there are available places. The selection procedure for category II and III pupils will be determined when the school starts enrolling pupils.

At the intake, there will be priority admittance, as follows:

- (1) Staff of IT agency and others related to EU institutions, whose children are the highest and foremost priority;
- (2) Foreign employees of embassies, multinational companies, universities, R&D institutions and other organisations;
- (3) Estonian nationals working in posts that require terms abroad due to rotation or mobility;
- (4) Any other potential applicants.

A waiting list will be used if the number of pupils is too great for the available number of places and until the school board deem it necessary to open a new class.

Governance

Tallinn European Schooling will be established as an autonomous school by the Innove Foundation. The internal school administration will be supervised by a Supervisory Board (primarily composed of representatives of Innove Foundation and the Ministry of Education and Research) in compliance with Estonian regulations on school governance. The Supervisory Board will appoint a Principal and will install an Administrative Board that will be asked for advice or permission (depending on the topic regulated by law) concerning important school matters regarding finance, human resources policies and education. The Administrative Board shall have the representation of pupils, parents, teachers and other staff, the national inspectors of the European School, the Estonian central government and other potential stakeholders (e.g. a representative of the European IT agency).

The General Rules of the school will determine how the decision power is divided between the Principal, the Supervisory Board and the Administrative Board. The General Rules lay down further provisions concerning the organisation of teaching, administration and funding as well as teaching content, the rights and duties of pupils and students, the condition of eligibility and the position of the school personnel.

Quality assurance

The school will self-evaluate the quality of education it provides and its impact at regular intervals. The school shall inform the Supervisory Board and Administrative Board of the main results of the evaluation process. Various participants (such as the Principal, teachers, staff members, pupils, parents and even external parties to a reasonable extent) will be involved in drawing up the annual action and development plan based on the curriculum as well as in evaluating the annual report of school results.

The school will also participate in any external valuations and inspections of its operations as decided by the Ministry of Education and Research, which may include inspections determined for the

accreditation procedure by the Board of Governors of the European Schools in relation to the European Schooling standards and criteria and its compliance with the European Schooling regulations. The school will also be accountable for the academic objectives and educational goals, quality, academic results and its compliance with European regulations to the Board of Governors of the European Schools in matters that apply to type II schools.

Implementation plan

To qualify as an accredited school for European Schooling type II, the school will submit a Dossier of Conformity in which the school will outline its educational policies, programme and plans in detail. The Tallinn European Schooling will start by opening nursery, primary and secondary years 1-3 in 2013.

Timeline

According to the timeline below the aim is to commence European Schooling in Tallinn in September 2013.

January 2012	Submission of the General File of Interest to the Board of Governors of the European Schools
April 2012	Consideration of the General File of Interest by the Board of Governors
September 2012	Depending on the positive stance by the Board of Governors on the General File of Interest, submission of the Dossier of Conformity for nursery, primary and secondary education.
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Recruitment of school staff and pupils- Start of the first group of European Schooling: Nursery (N1-N2), Primary (P1-P5) and Secondary (S1-S3)- Depending on the favourable consideration of the Board of Governors on the Dossier of Conformity, organisation of an audit in view of the future accreditation of the European Schooling in Tallinn.
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Depending on the favourable consideration of the Board of Governors on the Audit report, signing of the Accreditation and Cooperation Agreement.- Start of the Secondary 4 (2014), Secondary 5 (2015), Secondary 6 (2016) and Secondary 7 (2017).
2018	First European Baccalaureate

