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## **Risk management in the European Schools**

**Board of Governors of the European Schools  
Meeting of 3 to 5 December 2019 – Brussels**

## Introduction

The European Schools have started in December 2015 to put in place a formal risk management system and have since then reported regularly about the progress made in the meetings of the Budgetary Committee and Board of Governors.

The intention is to use the risk management system as management tool that helps to monitor the most important risks, prioritize and follow up activities and action plans but also to raise awareness at our stakeholders.

## Update of the School's risk registers

In April 2019, we presented the Schools' top risks in finance and administration with their respective assessment in the previous 2 years (2017 and 2018). These risks remained unchanged since then. This time, the schools have updated the pedagogical risks for their annual pedagogical school plans.

Below you will find the schools' top 5 risks in pedagogy with their respective assessment in the previous two years (September 2017 and 2018). In the following, the 3 most important risks are presented in the order of their importance:

- The risk 'Development of pupil numbers (constant increase) became the most important risk on average for the schools (16 out of 25 – yellow). Although the average assessment had decreased last year because of the better use of the Berkendael site, the risk remains a real issue in the schools of Brussels and Frankfurt.
- Second important risk is 'Difficulties in the recruitment of locally recruited teachers' (15 out of 25 – yellow). Four schools say that this is a high-level risk (assessment red). It is hoped that the approval of proposals to increase the attractiveness of the European Schools for the teaching staff by the Board of Governors' meeting (April 2019) will bring future improvements.
- Third important risk is 'the consequences of the Brexit decision' (14 out of 25 - yellow). The average assessment has been slightly decreased compared to last year (16 out of 25) as the schools had time to put in place mitigating measures in order to tackle the decision at a short term perspective.

## Update of European Schools' system risks

Below you will find the six ES' system risks with their current respective assessment.

- The most important risk remains the risk related to 'the fifth school' (highest level of 25 out of 25). This risk has been increased as there has not been any progression since April 2019 and it is likely that the provision of a 5<sup>th</sup> school is postponed to 2026. How the ES shall deal with constantly increasing pupil numbers until then is a question.
- The risk level related to 'unfilled secondment positions (for teachers and management positions) has been decreased as there was a positive development in relation to teachers' positions. The Board of Governors adopted with 2/3 majority, the proposal to increase the attractiveness of the European Schools for teaching staff, that entered into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019. It is nevertheless important to recognize that in the medium and long term perspective, the Brexit decision will add an additional layer to the risk especially for the quality of the english sections in all European Schools. This will probably create discrepancies between language sections.
- The risk concerning 'the lack of understanding and correct implementation of the new marking system' has been split into two risks: One related to 'the implementation in the schools' and particularly in the BAC cycle and the other one related to 'the valuation in the member states'. The assessment of the first one has been reduced slightly as we are on a good way. The second one remains the same as it is of paramount importance to ensure that a proactive and intensive communication of the new scheme is circulated within all members states in order to ensure its correct recognition.
- The other major risks that remained unchanged are, as follows:
  - The risk related to 'difficulties in retaining and recruiting highly qualified and specialized AAS (15 out of 25). We expect that the decision of the Board of Governors to approve the reform of the AAS salary and progression as from 2020 will reduce the risk level in the near future.
  - The strategic risk regarding 'the cost balance between memberstates and EU institutions' (15 out of 25). Also in relation to this risk, the Board of Governors adopted a new agreement in July 2019 by written procedure. It enters into force in 2020 and we will analyse its implementation and assess the effects on this strategic risk.

- The risk related to the accreditation process and cost neutrality of accredited european schools (AES) remains also an issue as the number of AES is growing constantly over years (the growth rate even accelerates). A progression is also foreseen in the risk assessment with the approval by the Board of Governors of the proposal for real cost neutrality from 2020.

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European schools top risks - update October 2019

Risk levels	
1- 4	The risk is under control and represents no immediate threat or impact.
5-19	Medium risk, needs managing and monitoring but there is no immediate threat which would have a significant impact.
20-25	High level risk, should be constantly monitored and managed

N°	Objectives	Risk Category	Risk Title	Risk Description	Risk Response	Action Plan	APSP 2017 -18	APSP 2018 -19	APSP 2019 -20
						Description	Average Assessment	Average Assessment	Average Assessment
1	Provision of multi-lingual, high quality education from early childhood to secondary school.	Pedagogical Risk	Lack of harmonization / coherence between sections	<p><u>REASONS:</u> Inconsistencies in teaching approaches, but also in the assessment and treatment of pupils.</p> <p><u>'CONSEQUENCES:</u> - Problems at all levels of the school, but particularly at the level of the Baccalaureate. - Complaints from parents, increased number of complaints to be dealt with by the Complaints Board. - Negative remarks from the Whole School Inspection. - Negative effects for the reputation of the School and the European School System.</p>	Reduce	<p><b>School:</b> - Management to insist on harmonised planning within subject and level groups. - Sampling by management of 'harmonised' record of work. - Subject and level meetings led by coordinators should always focus on harmonisation issues. - Schedule monthly meetings of subjects led by coordinators to discuss harmonised planning and assessment. Monthly meeting reports submitted to management. - Encourage S6 and S7 teachers to moderate each other's marking. - Share WSI action plan with whole school and management to review it regularly to ensure implementation. - Produce, publish and analyse data. Implement interventions to improve student performance.</p> <p>To be further discussed: - In the BAC course, widen harmonised exams to S6.</p>	10	10	9
2	- Assure pedagogical continuity - Reduction of hours not assured	Pedagogical Risk	Number of teaching hours not assured has a negative impact on school life  => Risk relates to all types of absences (illness, working group, school trip), whenever a course/class is not given	<p><u>REASONS:</u> On a yearly basis a number of teaching hours is lost due to absent teachers (for various reasons).</p> <p><u>CONSEQUENCES:</u> - Pupils miss important parts of their subjects content; - Negative impact on the learning attitude; - Learning process is affected due to the interruption in teaching. - Complaints and general dissatisfaction from parents and school community; - For the management of the school it is difficult to run the school on a day-to-day basis.</p>	Reduce	<p><b>School:</b> - Monitor absences and reasons for absences strictly. - Develop procedures for the organisation of replacements at school level. - Inform inspectors about absence rate and ask them to take their responsibility.</p> <p><b>OSG and School:</b> - Develop a harmonized template to record absences. - Compare national absence rates via Inspectors.</p>	10	11	10

3	Recruit, develop, assess, motivate and retain highly qualified staff.	Staff Risk	Difficulties in the recruitment and retention of locally recruited teachers	<p>REASONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Package (payment, duration of the contract, etc.) is not attractive enough;</li> <li>- Cost-sharing agreement does not set the minimum number of secondments;</li> <li>- Limited possibilities to advertise post widely;</li> <li>- Recruitment within a short timeframe;</li> <li>- Teachers leave the ES because of a better job offer (salary, permanent contract)</li> </ul> <p>CONSEQUENCES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lacking teachers for some lessons (particularly in EN, plus particular subjects in other languages);</li> <li>- too many extra hours for the teachers in place;</li> <li>- Impact on the quality of education provided by the school.</li> </ul>	Reduce	<p><b>School:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- find new and more efficient ways to advertise posts.</li> <li>- have a list of alternative candidates and keep contact with them.</li> <li>- get a feeling on the risk that the "main" candidate might disappear.</li> <li>- test motivation for the job during interviews.</li> <li>- dispose of enough replacement teachers in the most "difficult to fill" lessons.</li> <li>- make use of non-native qualified teachers.</li> </ul>	19	18	15
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guarantee quality teaching and learning</li> <li>- Guarantee native speakers for L1 and L2 (minimum)</li> </ul>	Strategic Risk	Consequences of BREXIT decision	<p>REASONS:</p> <p>UK informed European Council of the intention to leave the European Union by the end of March 2019.</p> <p>CONSEQUENCES:</p> <p>With withdrawal agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No contribution of the UK in form of secondments to the ES system after August 2021</li> <li>- No contribution of the UK in form of inspectors after August 2021</li> <li>- The ES Bac is recognized in the UK for students who acquire their Bac before August 2021, but also for students who are enrolled in the secondary cycle before 2021.</li> </ul> <p>Without withdrawal agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No contribution of the UK in form of secondments to the ES system after August 2020;</li> <li>- No contribution of the UK in form of inspectors after August 2020;</li> <li>- The Bac will be accepted if it is acquired before August 2020.</li> <li>- increase of funds from EU COM due to an increase of LRT;</li> <li>- Loss of English native speakers might affect the quality of teaching and learning (recruitment of non-native teachers for subjects taught in L2);</li> </ul>	Reduce	<p><b>School:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification of UK key personnel at risk to leave the school;</li> <li>- Ensure business continuity by identifying back-ups/successors for key personnel;</li> <li>- Conduct interviews with UK teachers to find out about their readiness to return to the UK and any conditions that would convince them to continue in the ES;</li> <li>- Build-up expertise to help students with career guidance in other countries;</li> <li>- Monitor the BREXIT negotiations and adjust the risk assessment accordingly in response to information from the OSG.</li> </ul> <p><b>OSG:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead BREXIT WG, regular information to schools about developments.</li> </ul>	15	16	14
5a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guarantee a place for Cat I pupils.</li> <li>Guarantee the safety and wellbeing of the pupils.</li> <li>Guarantee quality teaching and learning.</li> </ul>	Strategic Risk	Development of pupil numbers (constant increase)	<p>REASONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of pupils exceeds the size of the school because cat. I pupils increase on a yearly basis.</li> </ul> <p>CONSEQUENCES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The teaching quality suffers;</li> <li>- Safety of pupils is in danger: Accidents may increase. Problems with supervision;</li> <li>- Problems of supervision may arise;</li> <li>- Bullying between pupils increases.</li> </ul>	Reduce	<p><b>School:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maximize the use of the existing space. Use rooms creatively. Involve the school community as a think tank.</li> <li>- Contact local authorities for support. Negotiate. Seek assistance of the OSG.</li> </ul> <p><b>OSG and Brussels Schools:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead working group of the future development of the Brussels Schools</li> </ul>	21	18	16

5b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guarantee quality teaching and learning</li> <li>- Guarantee continuity of courses</li> <li>- Guarantee efficient use of public money</li> </ul>	Strategic Risk	Development of pupil numbers (decreasing/constantly low pupil numbers)	<p><b>REASONS:</b>  The number of pupils decreases constantly or to a critical level because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the European organisation that was once the reason for creating the ES is downsized;</li> <li>- entitled staff does not send children to the ES;</li> <li>- there are other high quality schools in the area.</li> </ul> <p><b>CONSEQUENCES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further parents may withdraw their children because they fear the closure of a section;</li> <li>- No longer a guarantee for secondment of teachers;</li> <li>- Loss of attractiveness for teachers to join the school;</li> <li>- No full timetable for seconded teachers in secondary school;</li> <li>- Financial risk in that justifying and obtaining the budget for small sections becomes more difficult adding more pressure in these sections.</li> </ul>	Reduce	<p><b>School:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improved communication with the European organization/ JRC that was the reason for creating the ES.</li> <li>- Promotion from within JRC to convince new and existing employees of quality and benefits for enrolment in EU schools.</li> <li>- Improve awareness for cat II and III in the region.</li> <li>- Make available informative sessions to explain the advantages of the EU Back compared to local schools.</li> <li>- Visit local companies to gain more CAT II.</li> <li>- Close communication amongst school sharing the same risks.</li> </ul>	15	12	13
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European Schools' top system risks - updated October 2019

Risk levels	
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5-19	Medium risk, needs managing and monitoring but there is no immediate threat which would have a significant impact.
20-25	High level risk, should be constantly monitored and managed

N°	Objectives	Risk Category	Risk Title	Risk Description	Risk Owner	Risk level	Risk level	Risk level	Risk level	Risk Response	Action Plan
						11.04.2018	30.10.2018	15.02.2019	15.10.2019		Description
1	Lead and support the Schools in the fulfilment of the ES mission	Staff Risk	Unfilled secondment positions (for teachers and management positions)	<p>REASONS Seconded Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In previous years, member states had difficulties in finding qualified teachers (English native speakers, Nursery and Primary, Math and Science)</li> <li>=&gt; Our package is not attractive enough</li> <li>=&gt; difficulties to provide for requested subjects</li> <li>=&gt; Brexit decision adds an additional layer to the risk. -</li> </ul> <p>REASONS Management Positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Member states seemed less ready to propose candidates for management positions (Head of Units in OSGES other than pedagogy related and Deputy Directors for Finance and Administration in the Schools);</li> <li>=&gt; Our package is not always attractive enough</li> </ul> <p>CONSEQUENCES Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Growing % of LRT, risk of quality for smaller schools at the countryside (Mol, Varese)</li> <li>- Need to recruit many teachers in short period of time and with limited resources.</li> </ul> <p>CONSEQUENCES Management positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delays in dealing with important topics;</li> <li>- Failure to implement projects on time, among others the new governance model;</li> <li>- Continued findings of the CoA with respect to the internal control system;</li> <li>- Growing number of DDFA are locally recruited.</li> </ul>	Secretary General; Deputy Secretary General; Directors	15	20	15	12	Reduce	<p><u>Extended Presidencies Working Group:</u> Proposal to increase the attractiveness of the European schools for teaching Staff ( document 2019-01-D-56-en-3) has been adopted by the Bog with 2/3 majority; mandate to analyse impact of measures</p> <p>-2018-03-D-8-en-2 Recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff: Reflection on the competitiveness of Administrative and Managerial Functions in the Office of the Secretary General.</p>



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						11.04.2018	30.10.2018	15.02.2019	15.10.2019		Description
2	Lead and support the Schools in the fulfilment of the ES mission	Staff Risk	Difficulties in retaining and recruiting highly qualified and specialized AAS	<p>REASONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Package compared to other companies is not competitive (particularly the salary, but also possibilities for telework, company car etc.);</li> <li>- Limited career opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>CONSEQUENCES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Valuable employees leave the ES System;</li> <li>- Quality of candidates is low for certain posts;</li> <li>- Key posts stay vacant for long periods;</li> <li>- Delays in all areas concerned.</li> </ul>	Head of HR; Directors	15	15	15	15	Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reform of the AAS salary and progression system (2019-02-D-30-en-3) and Draft implementing rules for the evaluation and progression of members of the AAS (2019-02-D-31-fr-3) have been adopted by 2/3 majority;</li> <li>- Mandate to report about new evaluation and promotion policy</li> </ul>
3	Provision of multi-lingual, high quality education from early childhood to secondary school.	Strategic Risk	Cost balance between member states and EU Institutions in danger	<p>REASONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Member states second less teachers (2014-15: 67,1% seconded teachers, 2017-18: 57,3% seconded teachers in ES system) while pupil numbers increase.</li> </ul> <p>CONSEQUENCES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase of number of LRT;</li> <li>- Unnecessary and unjustified increase of the contribution of the EU Commission;</li> <li>- Unilateral budget reductions by EU Commission.</li> </ul>	Secretary General; Deputy Secretary-General	15	15	15	15	Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A new cost sharing agreement has been adopted by the BoG in June 2019 by written procedure (2019-05-D-36-en-1 and 2019-06-LD-16-en-fr)</li> <li>- Mandate to Enlarged Presidency Working Group to conduct a mid-term evaluation and report to BoG in Dec. 2022.</li> </ul>
4	Provision of multi-lingual, high quality education from early childhood to secondary school.	Reputational Risk	5th School in Brussels expected for 2019 will not be available before 2026	<p>REASONS:</p> <p>Belgian authorities should have provided a 5th School for 2500 pupils, but it will not be available before 2024 at the earliest.</p> <p>CONSEQUENCES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negative impact on school life in the four schools who are and will be all overcrowded (3 of them are already overcrowded since many years);</li> <li>- Particular impact on safety and security;</li> <li>- Possibly not all Cat.1 pupils can be enrolled in the future;</li> <li>- Unpopular decisions to be taken.</li> </ul> <p>=&gt; temporary solution for next years urgently needed.</p>	Secretary General; Taskforce	12	20	20	25	Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taskforce mandated to propose alternative, temporary solution for next years;</li> <li>- prepare permanent solution;</li> <li>- Ensure conduction of an impact study.</li> </ul>

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						11.04.2018	30.10.2018	15.02.2019	15.10.2019		Description
5	Support and facilitate the creation of Accredited European Schools	Reputational Risk	Accreditation process and cost neutrality of Accredited European Schools (AES) is in danger	<p>REASONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accredited European Schools' regulations foresee cost neutrality for the tasks performed at the Office of the Secretary-General (OSG) (art.17).</li> <li>- AES need to provide equivalent education. The existing framework does not provide a harmonized approach.</li> <li>- Inspectors cannot cope with workload.</li> <li>- The number of AES is growing constantly.</li> </ul> <p>CONSEQUENCES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The AES bear a reputational risk for the system which is linked to the weaknesses in the accreditation process.</li> <li>- The work of a large proportion of staff working at the OSGES is already impacted by the existence of the AES. These costs are not taken into account and cost neutrality is no longer given.</li> <li>- Workload for inspectors is also increasing steadily.</li> </ul>	Secretary General	8	15	15	15	Reduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BoG approved in April 2019 the proposal for real cost neutrality (2018-10-D-63-fr-5). Entry into force for financial year 2020.</li> <li>- Regulations on Accredited European Schools (2019_01-D-12-en-6) and Audits of Accredited European Schools: audit process and toolkits (2019-07-D-20-en-2) in preparation for approval for BoG</li> </ul>
6	Provision of multi-lingual, high quality education from early childhood to secondary school.	Pedagogical Risk	Lack of correct implementation of the new marking system	<p>REASON:</p> <p>Implementation of a new marking scheme, start September 2018 until 1st BAC in 2021.</p> <p>CONSEQUENCES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Problems with the correct implementation of the new marking system especially as in the Bac of 2021;</li> </ul>	Secretary General; Deputy Secretary General; Head of BAC unit, Head of Pedagogical Development Unit			15	12	Reduce and transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proper implementation;</li> <li>- Trainings</li> </ul>
7	Provision of multi-lingual, high quality education from early childhood to secondary school.	Pedagogical Risk	Proper valuation at member states of the new marking system	<p>REASON:</p> <p>Implementation of a new marking scheme, start September 2018 until 1st BAC in 2021.</p> <p>CONSEQUENCES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Correct valuation in the member states of the new marking system (particularly at the universities);</li> </ul>	Secretary General; Deputy Secretary General; Head of BAC unit, Head of Pedagogical Development Unit			15	15	Reduce and transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proper communication (to member states by the OSGES, within member states by national delegations);</li> </ul>