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|  | **Schola Europaea** / Office of the Secretary-General  |

Ref.: **2020-03-D-5-en-5**

Orig.: EN

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**Request from Europa School, UK**

**Approved by the Board of Governors by written procedure 2020/29 on 8 May 2020**

**Introduction**

Details about the legal structure surrounding the withdrawal of the UK from the EU can be found in the 6th report of the Brexit working group (2019-12-D-26-en-2).

With regards to the accredited European school in Culham, the Europa School, the most recent accreditation agreement (covering N-S5) and additional accreditation agreement (covering S6 and S7) have been written in line with the contents of Article 125 of the Withdrawal Agreement, signed between the EU and the UK and ratified by the European Parliament on 29 January 2020.

In keeping with Article 125, and the decision by the Board of Governors on the most recent audit report (2018-12-D-16-en-2), the Europa School is currently accredited for all cycles until 31 August 2021.

**The situation**

On the 3rd February 2020, the Principal of the school and the Chairman of the Europa School wrote to the Secretary-General to outline their ideas for the curriculum at the school post August 2021. A copy of this letter can be found in Annex 1. The school will enter students for the European Baccalaureate in Summer 2020 and 2021 before moving over to the International Baccalaureate. In reality, this means that the first students to take the International Baccalaureate will start their studies in S6 in September 2020 and the school will have an overlap period when they are accredited to provide both the European and the International Baccalaureate. The school has recently been authorised as an IB World School and can now offer an IB programme from September 2020.

The changes that need to be made to the curriculum and the syllabuses at all levels in the school are understandable quite significant and require substantial training and development of resources. The school is concerned that they will be unable to make all the required changes in time for 1 September 2021. They have therefore outlined the following proposals:

* Europa School UK wishes to use the European School syllabuses for S2-S5 (inclusive) for the school year 2021-22 and for s3 and s5 in the school year 2022-23.
* As of 1 September 2023, the school will no longer use any ES syllabuses.
* The school will not seek any equivalence of qualifications during the transitional period (1 September 2021- 31 August 2023).

From the information provided, the Secretary-General concluded that years S2-S5 for the school year 2021-22 and years S3 and S5 for the school year 2022-23 will be recognised by the UK authorities, despite the fact that ES syllabi will be used. This conclusion has not been disputed by the school or the UK authorities (Annex 2).

The Secretary-General was also informed (Annex 1, final paragraph) that these proposals were made with the full support of the UK delegation at the Department of Education; Mr Gregory (Regional Commissioners Office) and Ms Keleszade (European Schools Division). Confirmation of the UK delegation’s position on this matter was requested and the full response can be found in Annex 3. In summary, the UK delegation neither supported nor opposed the request.

Further information has since been received from the UK delegation (annex 4).

The UK delegation pointed out that it is important to understand that the UK has a variety of schooling options and ‘Free Schools’, of which Europa School UK is one, are free to teach a broad and balanced curriculum differing from the UK National Curriculum, taught in ‘Maintained Schools’. As such, the Europa School UK is free to choose the curriculum that it wants to teach and the Department of Education do not object to the request made to the Board of Governors.

This leads onto the question of recognition of the Europa School curriculum by the UK authorities. The Secretary-General sought further reassurance on whether the UK authorities would recognise the years completed by the pupils at the Europa School, who were following the curriculum of the European Schools, as shown in Annex 1 of document 2020-03-D-05-en-2. Such a recognition could, in no way, be sought from the European Schools, starting from the school year 2021-2022, despite the fact the Europa School would be given the permission to exceptionally use the European School syllabi. The response from the UK authorities, in the person of Ms Ismet Keleszade, Head of the UK delegation was as follows:

*“The English national system differs in terms of ‘recognition’ to the European Schools system. For instance, it is not usual practice to ask a student to repeat a year in the English system or formally mark their completion of it. Formal recognition of studies in England traditionally happens at the end of Year 11 (GCSEs) and Year 13 (A-Levels). Europa School UK have always had a system in place to ensure that children not progressing to the European Baccalaureate are able to take GSCE examinations or A-Levels as alternative qualifications - this arrangement should continue. As part of the transition to a new curriculum, the Trust Board of Europa School UK are exploring options for the potential introduction of a qualification at the end of Year 11 (GCSE/International Baccalaureate Middle Years Diploma).”*

**Decision of the Board of Governors**

After scrutinising the request made by Europa School UK, outlined above, and the views of the various stakeholders, outlined in the annexes, the Board of Governors approved the request, given the very special circumstances for the ending of the Agreements and in the best interest of the pupils already enrolled in the school. Europa School is requested to clearly communicate to the relevant pupils and parents, that the use of the European School syllabi for S2-S5 (inclusive) for the school year 2021-22 and for S3 and S5 in the school year 2022-23 will not mean equivalence of qualifications, acquired by the pupils in Europa School for those years, to the ones acquired in a European School or an Accredited European School.

**Annex 1**

We are writing to you following a recent meeting with the UK Department of Education about our curriculum plans following the end of our Accreditation to the European School System in August 2021, assuming the timeframe contained in the EU withdrawal agreement.

You are probably aware that we have been working towards authorisation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. Following an IB verification visit in early March, we hope to receive final authorisation to start teaching the IB diploma programme from September 2020 with the current S5 cohort. This change process has been a significant development for the school, involving extensive retraining and extra workload for our secondary teachers. This will continue over the next two years as we implement these plans – our goal being to continue to provide a highly academic programme leading to success at the Baccalaureate level. The IB allows us to continue our core objective: to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum with advanced language learning as well as enabling us to deliver Humanities through the stream languages (German, French and Spanish).

We are also considering our curriculum plans below S6 to be implemented in September 2021 when we lose our

European School accreditation.

Our primary school has a unique model with immersion in the stream languages, combining European School and UK National curricula. We have already started the process of reviewing the curriculum content and we will replace European School references with content from National systems. We are also looking to replace key resources such as Intermaths but have yet to find another harmonised approach to mathematics practice. We are confident that the primary school will be ready to implement an alternative curriculum away from the ES by August 2021.

Our secondary school, which is a single English section, closely follows the European School system except for teaching of Religion and Computer Science where it follows UK national curricula. We are actively investigating alternative curricula that would allow us to maintain our advanced language learning including the study of subjects through the stream languages. The options we are considering include:

1) Use of UK national curriculum and developing bespoke Europa language and Humanities curriculums.

We are looking to obtaining partnership status with language networks and have already received

PASCH status with the Goethe Institute.

2) Use of the IB middle years programme with some extra curriculum development to be able to deliver

Humanities in German.

Both options require significant training and development of new teaching plans and resources, where in the past we would have access to European School resources. So, while it is our clear purpose and plan to move the school away from the European School curriculum, we are concerned that the proposed timescale does not provide sufficient time to implement an entirely new curriculum across all phases of the school. We simply do not have enough bandwidth to effect the necessary changes simultaneously, and are concerned about excessive teacher workload and burnout, particularly in the secondary school. Our priority must be to safeguard a high- quality education for all of our 900 students and to sustain confidence in our school among all stakeholders.

After careful consideration of all of the issues and options, we are therefore proposing a slightly modified timetable for curriculum implementation – one that balances the need to move to a new curriculum without undue delay with the following essential requirements for curriculum implementation:

• sufficient time for detailed curriculum analysis, selection and preparation

• consistent curricula in each education cycle (S1-3 & S4-S5) for each cohort

• adequate focus and resource on each stage of the curriculum due to phased introduction of curricula in each cycle.

The proposal is outlined in the diagram below.

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| **Current (19-20) cohort** | **2019-2020** | **2020-2021** | **2021-2022** | **2022-2023** | **2023-2024** | **2024-2025** | **2025-2026** | **2026-2027** |
| **S7** | EB |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **S6** | EB | EB |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **S5** | ES | IB diploma | IB diploma |  |  |  |  |  |
| **S4** | ES | ES | IB diploma | IB diploma |  |  |  |  |
| **S3** | ES | ES | ES\* | IB diploma | IB diploma |  |  |  |
| **S2** | ES | ES | ES\* | ES\* | IB diploma | IB diploma |  |  |
| **S1** | ES | ES | ES\* | New KS4 | New KS4 | IB diploma | IB diploma |  |
| **P6** | Europa PC | ES | ES\* | ES\* | New KS4 | New KS4 | IB diploma | IB diploma |
| **P5** | Europa PC | Europa PC | New KS3 | New KS3 | New KS3 | New KS4 | New KS4 | IB diploma |

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| EB |  | European Baccalaureate |
| ES |  | European Schools Curriculum |
| Europa PC |  | Unique Europa Primary Curriculum |
| IB diploma |  | International Baccalaureate diploma |
| New KS3 |  | New Key Stage 3 curriculum TBC |
| New KS4 |  | New Key Stage 4 curriculum TBC |
| **\*** |  | ES curriculum not officially accredited |

Given this overview of our position, the governing body of Europa School requests a transitional arrangement for the academic years 2021-22, and 2022-23 where we would be continuing to use the European School syllabuses and marking system for some year groups in S1-S5 as shown in the schematic above. However, all other references to our previous ES accreditation would be removed from our systems, and we would not seek any equivalence of qualifications with the ES during this transitional period.

We hope and trust that the Governing Body of the European Schools will understand the practical and pedagogical reasons for this proposal. The request is made in good faith as we steer our new course away from the European Schools post-Brexit, and we would be happy to follow up this request in a meeting. We have also copied in representatives from the Department of Education who are supporting the school – Tom Gregory (Regional Commissioners Office) and Ismet Keleszade (European Schools Division).

With thanks and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Annex 2: email correspondence

**On Wed, 4 Mar 2020** at 08:43, OSG ACCREDITED EUROPEAN SCHOOLS wrote:

Dear Ms Wood and Dr Brent,

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I would like to thank you for your letter of 3rd February 2020 in which you set out your plans for the future curriculum at the Europa School UK.

In your letter you have outlined the following information:

* Europa School UK is accredited until 31st August 2021 and will use the European School curriculum and syllabuses.
* Europa School UK wishes to use the European School syllabuses for S2-S5 (inclusive) for the school year 2021-22 and for s3 and s5 in the school year 2022-23.
* As of 1 September 2023, the school will no longer use any ES syllabuses.
* The school will not seek any equivalence of qualifications during the transitional period (1 September 2021- 31 August 2023).
* The request is made with the full support of the UK delegation at the Department of Education; Mr Gregory and Ms Keleszade (copied in to this email).
* We derive from the above that years S2-S5 for the school year 2021-22 and years S3 and S5 for the school year 2022-23 will be recognised by the UK Authorities, despite the fact that ES syllabi will be used.

As you are aware, and have mentioned in your letter, this request will need to be approved by the Board of Governors of the European Schools.  Therefore, we have asked our legal advisor to prepare a document, outlining your request, to be presented at the next meeting of the Board of Governors in April 2020.   The document will be neutral, but the proposal at the end will recommend a favourable response to your request.   We will inform you of their decision.

**From:** Andrew Brent <dr.a.brent@gmail.com>
**Sent:** **07 March 2020 01:39**
**To:** OSG ACCREDITED EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

**Cc:** WOOD Lynn; Tom.GREGORY; KELESZADE Ismet; OSG SECRETARY GENERAL (OSG); OSG EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR (OSG); OSG DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL (OSG); ES LEGAL QUESTIONS
**Subject:** Re: Your request concerning the future curriculum at the Europa School UK

Dear Clare

Thank you very much indeed for your email, and for your help in bringing this formally to the Board of Governors of the European Schools. We remain fully committed to the transition to an alternative curriculum and are grateful for your support in doing this in as fair and responsible a way as possible for the students.

With thanks and best wishes

Andrew Brent

[Chair of the Governing Body, Europa School UK]

Annex 3: email correspondence from the Head of the UK delegation

Dear Mr Marcheggiano,

[..]

With regards to Europa School UK’s request to continuing using the European Baccalaureate syllabuses and curriculum for academic years 2021-22 and 2022-23, the UK delegation neither supports nor opposes this application. We are neutral on the matter. We have advised Europa School UK that any agreement reached is to be between the school and European Schools.

I hope that provides helpful clarification as to our position and as always, very happy to discuss further.

Kind regards,

Ismet Keleszade

Annex 4: further email correspondence from the Head of the UK delegation

Dear Giancarlo,

[…]

In response to your two questions:

1. **Years completed by the pupils enrolled at ESUK are covered by the Agreement with European Schools up to the end of 2020-2021 school year.**

This is correct. The agreement covers pupils enrolled at Europa School UK until the end of the 2020-21 school year.

1. **Since ESUK is first of all a National school, my understanding would be that, independently from the curriculum used, years completed by ESUK pupils in years S2-S5 over the school years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 will be recognised by UK Authorities.**

The English national system differs in terms of ‘recognition’ to the European Schools system. For instance, it is not usual practice to ask a student to repeat a year in the English system or formally mark their completion of it. Formal recognition of studies in England traditionally happens at the end of Year 11 (GCSEs) and Year 13 (A-Levels). Europa School UK have always had a system in place to ensure that children not progressing to the European Baccalaureate are able to take GSCE examinations or A-Levels as alternative qualifications - this arrangement should continue. As part of the transition to a new curriculum, the Trust Board of Europa School UK are exploring options for the potential introduction of a qualification at the end of Year 11 (GCSE/International Baccalaureate Middle Years Diploma).

I hope this provides helpful confirmation.

Kind regards,