

EUROPEAN SCHOOLS BERGEN, KARLSRUHE, MOL AND VARESE
PARENTS ASSOCIATIONS
OUDERVERENIGINGEN
ELTERNVEREINIGUNGEN
ASSOCIAZIONI DEI GENITORI

28 March 2012

To : Mr. M. Šefčovič, Vice-president of the European Commission
Mrs. M. Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner of the European Commission

Sent by email to maros.sefcovic@ec.europa.eu and maire.geoghegan-quinn@ec.europa.eu

Dear Vice-President Šefčovič,
Dear Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn,

The CONVENTION DEFINING THE STATUTE OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS¹ states in Article 1 that:

*“The purpose of the Schools is to educate together children of the staff of the European Communities. **Besides the children covered by the Agreements provided for in Articles 28 and 29, other children may attend the Schools within the limits set by the Board of Governors..”***

As you are aware, the schools created for the establishments of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) depend on Category 2 and Category 3 pupils to ensure the service delivered to the Category 1 children, whose father and/or mother or caretaker(s) are full Commission staff. The presence of Category 2 and Category 3 pupils allows to reach the critical mass to arrange courses and also contributes to limiting the average cost per pupil.

The proposals regarding the Category 3 fees as put forward by the working group on fees created by the Board of Governors of the European Schools and deemed not stringent enough by the Commission are **destructive** to the JRC schools. Any increase above inflation in the fees for both Category 3 and Category 2 pupils in the current economical circumstances **will lead to a collapse of many of the language sections, jeopardize the existence of the schools and lead to a massive loss of revenue for the system.**

The fees paid by cat.2 and 3 pupils are the biggest and in fact the only substantial external source of income to the system, currently generating a revenue of 11%. Willingly trying to reduce the numbers of these pupils when there is space available is going against every principle of sound economic governance. This is clearly illustrated by the following examples.

¹ http://www.eurasc.eu/fichiers/contenu_fichiers1/257/SW1-21994A0817en.pdf

Over the calendar year 2004, ES Varese lost 130 Category 3 pupils, leading to a €336,969 decrease in revenue. This was the result of a failed attempt to, on the one hand, reduce the numbers of Category 2 and 3 pupils in order to reach the 50% Category 1 Gaignage criterion and, on the other hand, to replace these Category 3 pupils by Category 2 where possible. The resulting deficit was the main cause for an additional budget request of €222,310.² On the other hand, ES Karlsruhe has been able, due to its location, to considerably reduce the Commission's contribution to the school by attracting a large number of cat. 2 pupils.

The price elasticity of Category 3 fees was already highlighted in 2006, when a working group commissioned ULB to conduct a study on the effect of fee increases³. This study clearly pointed out that fee increases lead to a diminishing pupil population and a **DECREASE of revenues**.

We ask you to accept the evidence that the costs generated by Category 3 pupils are marginal, as has been pointed out by the Van Dijck report⁴, that looked into the viability of ES Bergen, Culham, Karlsruhe and Mol. An increased number of Cat. 3 pupils cannot lead to a split of classes. Additionally, cat.3 pupils are excluded from the most expensive services provided by the system, namely mother tongue tuition or integration support and admission to the school when it is clear upon registration that a SEN contract will be needed. The infrastructure they use and the teachers that educate them have to be provided for the benefit of the Category 1 pupils anyway.

The Commission can rightly be proud that the cost for its overall administration amounts to only 5% of its budget. Within the envelope of administrative expenses, the budget of the European Schools of type 1 amounts to only 2%, i.e. 1/1000, of the Union budget. We urge you as Commissioners responsible for the working conditions of Commission staff in general or for those of JRC staff specifically to ensure that the staff posted outside of the big centres Brussels and Luxemburg can rely on the same services as their colleagues. The four JRC sites have been located in less favourable to unfavourable locations because of the nuclear research carried out. The staff involved should not become the victims of this necessity.

Yours sincerely,

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² Doc. 2004-D-239-en-2 Supplementary and amending budget No 3/2004 European School, Varese.

³ Doc. 2006-D-123-en-2, School Fees in the European Schools – Final Report – March 2006. The revenue increase from a reduced cat3 fee is true for all of the scenarios in the report using ULB fee-optimisation model (scenarios x.6 and x.7).

⁴ "Evaluation of the European Schools at Culham, Mol, Bergen and Karlsruhe and options for the future", Final report, Bureau van Dijk Management Consultants SA, Brussels 17 August 2006.