

1) First of all, some basic information on the Berkendael site:

(i) According to the Board of Governors' conclusions a 5th European School in Brussels (Brussels V) is needed at the latest for the school year 2015/2016.

(ii) There should be hope (in particular as regards environmental and urban planning concerns) that in the discussions on the site of Brussels V the place of residence of the children with a right to be enrolled (priority 1 children) will not be disregarded (again), i.e. Brussels V will be situated somewhere in the southern suburbs of Brussels where the majority of staff of the European Institutions live.

(iii) The Berkendael site (which is in the southern suburbs) has been given by the Belgian authorities to the European Schools for an indefinite duration and will therefore not have to be returned in 2012 when Brussels IV opens in Laeken.

(iv) The women's prison next to the Berkendael site will be closed in 2015; following a renovation this building and its grounds could enlarge the Berkendael site sufficiently to host 2,500 pupils, the size of the other European Schools in Brussels.

(v) In view of the above it is far from excluded that the Belgian authorities will propose the Berkendael site as the grounds for Brussels V; in particular as this solution would probably be less costly than any other: the buildings currently occupied have already been renovated to host Brussels IV temporarily and the renovation costs for the women's prison should be very limited compared to what is currently being invested in Laeken and would otherwise have to be invested to turn a completely different complex into a European School.

(vi) Until now, the Belgian caretaker government could not pronounce itself on the site of Brussels V. With the new Belgian government taking office in the next couple of week's negotiations on the site of Brussels V are likely to intensify quickly. In any case, the more time passes the more pleads in favour of keeping Berkendael open in the bridging period between now and 2015: it is getting ever more unlikely that another site can be identified and renovated in time for 2015 whereas the Berkendael site is renovated and could host 1,100 pupils as it stands which is amply sufficient in the first couple of years of Brussels V during which the building of the women's prison could be converted to provide more space as the school grows.

(vii) According to informal rumours (the Secretariat-General might be able to confirm this) there are quite far advanced plans to use the Berkendael site in the school year 2012/2013 and beyond for roughly 400 pupils in nursery and primary classes of the Brussels I school whose building "Reine Fabiola" needs to be renovated. This would occupy less than half of the Berkendael site temporarily for a couple of years with the rest remaining empty if all current pupils of Brussels IV indeed move to Laeken next year as planned.

2) Secondly, some food for thought on the current enrolment policy and what it has led to:

(i) Throughout Europe and the world, pupils are allocated places in schools according to two simple principles: the closer the school to the child's place of residence the better and the younger the child the closer the school should be. Both principles are disregarded by the current enrolment policy for European Schools in Brussels which in extremis leads to the untenable situation that young children at the age of 4 have to take the bus for 3 hours per day to the European School in which they have been allocated a place while another European School with the same language section might just be next doors to home.

(ii) Every day, around 200 buses transport pupils of the currently 4 European Schools in Brussels through the city, which has recently been crowned as Europe's most congested place. Add to this thousands of cars which make detours in order to drop off children at one of the 4 European Schools. It is clear that this has a sizable impact on the Brussels' traffic problems.

(iii) More than 8,000 of the currently slightly more than 10,000 pupils in the 4 Brussels' schools or 80% are placed in a language section which exists in more than one school (FR, EN, DE, IT, ES, NL),

roughly 6,000 or 60% of the overall number are in one of the three language sections which exist in all four schools and will most probably also exist in the 5th (FR, EN, DE).

(iv) While it might have been difficult or at least less pressing to use geographical criteria for allocating places for pupils of these language sections while there were only two schools or three in Brussels and all of these in the south-east of the city, not to do so – contrary to what is the norm in the member states – when there are four and soon five schools spread all over Brussels does not make sense any more. Using geographical proximity as the main criterion for the 80% of the schools' overall population enrolled in language sections that exist in at least two schools would of course be advantageous as regards carbon footprint and traffic congestion considerations.

(v) The Secretariat-General pretends that the current enrolment policy satisfies the large majority of parents as currently still more than 70% get allocated a place in the school of their first choice. This is an interesting number: First of all, it means that almost 30% do not, which does not seem to be a very satisfying overall result. Secondly, it is clear that with the current enrolment policy on siblings, parents with already a child in one European School have a 100% satisfaction rate for any ensuing child while the satisfaction rate for those parents who enrol their first child is probably way below 40% if not lower. In case the whole school Brussels IV indeed moves to Laeken in 2012 as currently foreseen, the rigid enrolment policy for 2012/2013 whose guiding principles the Board of Governors has endorsed in its September meeting (cf. 2011-09-D-4-fr-1) will make the percentage drop even further.

3) Advantages of keeping Berkendael open, first as second site of Brussels IV and then as a nucleus of Brussels V to be opened in 2015 either in Berkendael itself or elsewhere in the south of Brussels:

(i) Several hundred children currently enrolled in Berkendael who live in the south of Brussels would not have to undergo the long commute of a total of around 3 hours per day.

(ii) Children living in the south whose parents have refrained from enrolling their children in a European School for fear of being sent to Laeken could enrol their children in Brussels IV, Berkendael site, awaiting the opening of the 5th school in 2015.

(iii) Some of the pupils currently enrolled in Brussels I (Uccle) or Brussels III (Ixelles) might ask for a voluntary transfer to Berkendael provided the site is confirmed to serve at least as transitory site prior to the opening of Brussels V as this would mean a shorter way to school for them. This in turn could help to alleviate the overcrowding of those two schools. We have already received indications to this end from some parents with children currently enrolled in Uccle.

(iv) The site in Laeken would start with fewer pupils which should make the transition easier for pupils, teachers and parents alike in the first year and will prevent that Laeken becomes just as overcrowded as the other European Schools as quickly as possible.

(v) It would also provide the necessary margin of manoeuvre to put in place over time a new enrolment policy taking into account geographical criteria for the 80% of pupils in language sections that exist in two schools or more.

(vi) Without changing the guiding principles for the enrolment policy for 2012/2013 which the Board of Governors has already endorsed in its September meeting (cf. 2011-09-D-4-fr-1), the satisfaction rate is likely to go up if newly enrolled pupils will be allocated according to geographical criteria to either Laeken or Berkendael.

(vii) The number of buses which transport pupils to and from European Schools could be somewhat reduced (which would also mean less transport costs to be borne by the EU budget – cf. in more detail in sections 4-6 below).

4) Potential costs of keeping Berkendael open for Brussels IV pupils in 2012/2013 – assumptions:

(i) It is clear that in the current circumstances a decision to keep Berkendael open cannot be justified vis-à-vis the Budgetary Authority, or the European public at large, if it incurs high additional costs. Therefore, the calculations follow a minimalist, no-frills approach, i.e what would be the minimum supplementary costs for keeping the Berkendael site open, taking account of any savings that could be made, while maintaining the minimum standards of the European School curriculum. The

emphasis is on additional, i.e. only costs are taken into account for this calculation that come on top of what would need to be incurred if the whole school moved to Laeken.

(ii) The calculations are based on the Brussels IV nursery and primary school population in the next school year 2012/2013 as the costs for running two secondary cycles in both Laeken and Berkendael with such a low number of pupils seem prohibitively high; in any case, long commutes are less harmful for older children in secondary school. It is assumed that half of the current school population in nursery and primary as well as half of the additional pupils enrolling in nursery and primary classes in September 2012 will stay in Berkendael (around 600 pupils according to the document adopted by the Board of Governors last September - cf. [2011-09-D-4-fr-1](#), page 22, of which some two thirds would be current pupils and the rest newly enrolled in 2012). This seems a valid assumption in view of the number of petition signatories, taking into account that possibly not all parents whose place of residence is closer to Berkendael than to Laeken have signed the petition.

(iii) Two scenarios have to be distinguished: should the Brussels I nursery and primary sections temporarily move to the Berkendael site for 2-3 years (cf. section 1 (vii) above) this would of course very much limit the infrastructure and fixed costs for Brussels IV during a period that would bridge the time until 2015 when the 5th school is supposed to open. In this case all (or at least most of) the infrastructure costs (security, heating, electricity, but also gym equipment, music equipment, library, kitchen, etc.) would have to be budgeted anyway by Brussels I. If however the Secretariat-General confirms that Brussels I nursery and primary sections will not move to the Berkendael site in 2012/2013 the costs of keeping Berkendael open for Brussels IV pupils in 2012 and beyond would have to be increased by these infrastructure costs.

(iv) Of course, these calculations are made without any detailed knowledge of the real costs and can therefore only be rough estimations based on what is publicly available. For the budget 2012 the figures refer to the four months of September till December 2012. For the following two years (2013 and 2014) the costs consequently have to be tripled while for 2015 the 5th school would in any case have to be budgeted.

5) Additional costs - Scenario 1: move of Brussels I nursery and primary to Berkendael site in 2012/2013.

No additional infrastructure costs (heating, electricity, cleaning, garbage, lift maintenance, security, nurse, concierge, etc.) would have to be budgeted – the additional costs for schooling 600 Brussels IV pupils in Berkendael when the site has to be heated and lit for the Brussels I pupils anyway are marginal. In any case, whether the 600 children occupy space that needs to be heated and lit in Laeken or in Berkendael does not make any difference. Conversely, either a significant part of the Laeken site or a significant part of the Berkendael site will remain unused in 2012/2013 and will consequently not have to be heated and lit. Therefore, the only sizable additional cost factor when keeping Berkendael open for Brussels IV pupils beyond 2012 would be the few additional teachers needed for classes that would not have to be split if all pupils moved to Laeken.

(i) Teachers 1: The projections in the document endorsed in September (cf. [2011-09-D-4-fr-1](#)) foresee a total of 56 classes (and hence teachers) in the school year 2012/2013 for nursery and primary classes. Splitting the nursery and primary school population of Brussels IV in half and distributing the pupils roughly evenly to Laeken and Berkendael would mean that an additional 4 classes (and hence 4 additional teachers) would be needed for the DE language section, 1 additional class (and teacher) for EN, none for FR and 5 and 6 respectively for IT and NL. Hence, a total of 16 additional teachers would be needed.

Sections split in half	DE	EN	FR	IT	NL	Total
Nursery	2	3	6	2	2	15
P1	2	2	4	2	2	12
P2	2	2	3	2	2	11
P3	2	2	3	2	2	11
P4	2	2	4	2	2	12
P5	2	2	3	2	2	11
Total	12(+4)	13(+1)	23	12(+5)	12(+6)	72(+16)

(iii) Teachers 2: However, in a minimalist approach it could also be envisaged to split only the DE, EN, FR sections, i.e. those that would most likely also be opened in a 5th school or at least to let the NL section move in its entirety to Laeken as the section is very small in any case (58 pupils in 2011/2012). Keeping Berkendael open for only DE, EN, FR and possibly IT pupils would lead to the number of additional teachers to decrease to 5 or 10 respectively. The number of additional teachers could be even further reduced to 4 (if only DE, EN, FR were to stay) or 6 (DE, EN, FR, IT) if in the Berkendael part of the DE and IT sections several classes were taught together (e.g. P1/P2 IT, P3/P4/5 IT and P3/P4/P5 DE) as is currently already the case in the NL section. The absolute minimum number of additional teachers needed can therefore be assumed to be either 4 or 6, depending on whether you exclude or include the Italian section in the splitting.

Absolute minimum	DE	EN	FR	IT	Total
Nursery	2	3	6	2	13
P1	2	2	4	2	10
P2	2	2	3	1	8
P3	2	2	3	2	9
P4	2	2	4	1	9
P5	1	2	3	1	7
Total	11(+3)	13(+1)	23	9(+2)	56(+6)

(iv) Teachers 3: Since the large majority of teachers is seconded and paid by their respective member state the additional salary costs only concern the top-up paid by the European Schools and are therefore rather limited for the European Schools' budget. For the budget 2012 (4 additional months, September till December 2012), the total supplementary costs for teachers should therefore be in the range of €50,000 to €100,000 for the latter scenarios (without splitting the NL section; 4-10 additional teachers). For the following two years (2013 and 2014) the costs would have to be tripled while for 2015 the 5th school would in any case have to be budgeted. These costs would increase if contrary to current practice a majority of these additional teachers were not seconded but hired as "chargé de cours" – in that case cost estimations for the 4 months in 2012 could range between €100,000 and €150,000.

(v) Support staff: While the entire school administration (Director, Deputy Director, financial assistants, secretaries, etc.) would be based in Laeken it should be assumed that at least 1 additional full-time secretary will be needed on site in Berkendael for administrative issues. No additional support staff would be needed as concierge, IT expert, nurse and librarian would in any case have to be provided by Brussels I. Any further costs for Brussels IV teaching staff (chargés de cours for SEN, etc.) would be distributed between the Laeken and Berkendael sites according to the identified needs of individual pupils. Rough estimate for 1 additional secretary: €60,000 per year, i.e. €20,000 for 2012; some additional costs for supplementary Religious Education courses will be incurred as these already regroup several classes in each language section; on the other hand, some of these could be held together with the limited number of Brussels I primary classes present in Berkendael - again, a very rough estimate: also €60,000 per year, €20,000 for 2012.

(vi) Deputy Director on site: During the presence of the Brussels I nursery and primary the overall supervision of the Berkendael site could be ensured by a Deputy Director from Brussels I so that no additional Deputy Director for Brussels IV would be needed on site in Berkendael. Should no Deputy Director from Brussels I be placed in Berkendael, one of the two Deputy Directors of Brussels IV could remain in Berkendael as overall supervisor for both the Brussels I and the Brussels IV populations. In view of the relatively small size of the Laeken school site population (around a thousand pupils in 2012/2013 increasing beyond 2,000 in 2015) no additional Deputy Director post would have to be created in the Brussels IV school. In this latter case, and always with a view to reducing costs for Brussels IV, there could even be an arrangement that Brussels I reimburse Brussels IV a part (half?) of the salary costs for the Deputy Director as this person would supervise pupils from both schools. Rough estimate €100,000 per year top up, €30,000 for 2012, i.e. -€50,000 savings per year for Brussels IV, or -€15,000 in 2011.

(vii) Infrastructure 1 - material that can be shared out between Berkendael and Laeken: It is assumed that as a bit less than half the population remains in Berkendael that consequently the same proportion of the equipment also remains, i.e. library, gym equipment (there are currently two gyms in Berkendael, hence the equipment of one would be moved to Laeken while the equipment of the other

would remain in Berkendael), music room, playground, computers, chairs, desks, teaching material, etc., so that only marginal additional costs would be incurred in Berkendael. Rough, but rather generous estimate: €50,000 additional costs to start off in 2012, the same amount (for the whole year) in 2013 and 2014.

(viii) Infrastructure 2 - material that cannot be shared out: For those parts that cannot be divided, e.g. the canteen kitchen (if it is foreseen to move this to Laeken despite the occupation of part of the Berkendael site by the Brussels I nursery and primary) the least costly solution would be to start off in September 2012 with lunch on delivery rather than a preparation on site as this would entail no additional costs for the school's budget but would be entirely financed by the parents. In any case, costs for any potential kitchen equipment would have to be shared between Brussels I and Brussels IV and should only be budgeted for 2013 in order not to unduly burden the 2012 budget.

(ix) Savings in removal costs: A bit less than half of the school's equipment would remain in Berkendael which should significantly reduce the removal costs for moving the school to Laeken. No valid estimate possible without knowing what has been budgeted for this in the 2012 budget or alternatively without some reliable quotes. Total removal costs are unlikely too much below €100,000 for the whole school; to assume savings of €20,000 does not seem unrealistic, probably more.

(x) Savings in transport costs of pupils: bus transport costs for priority 1 pupils with parents working in a European Institution are paid out of the EU budget (more than €1,000 per pupil per year). While this is not budgeted in the European Schools' budget it is nonetheless money taken out of the overall EU budget and therefore needs to be taken into account when calculating the additional costs for keeping Berkendael open next year. It is assumed that at least 75% of those pupils remaining in Berkendael would use the bus and get their transport paid out of the EU budget if they were moved to Laeken. This would mean that a total of $450 (75\%) \times €1,000 = €450,000$ could be saved per year, or around €150,000 in 2012, provided that a decision is taken and communicated to parents that no bus transport will be offered and reimbursed for pupils in Berkendael during the bridging period until 2015 as it is assumed that they live close enough to be brought to school by other means.

(xi) Conclusion:

Rough estimate if Brussels I in Berkendael	2012 (4 Month)	2013	2014
Additional teachers	100,000	300,000	300,000
Support staff	40,000	120,000	120,000
Deputy Director	-15,000	-50,000	-50,000
Add. Equipment	50,000	50,000	50,000
Savings removal	-20,000		
Savings transport	-150,000	-450,000	-450,000
Total	5,000	-30,000	-30,000

Hence, for the scenario in which the Berkendael site is shared between Brussels I and Brussels IV in 2012-2014 and by using a middle estimate for additional teacher costs of around €100,000 for 2012 and €300,000 per year for 2013 and 2014, there are no overall additional costs and even some minor savings could be generated if the savings in transport costs are taken into account. But even when assuming that the additional teachers are hired as "chargé de cours" rather than seconded from the Member States the costs for keeping Berkendael open until the 5th school opens in 2015 are relatively marginal (55,000 in 2012 and 120,000 per year in 2013 and 2014) in view of an overall budget of around €160,000,000 per year and could without any problem be financed.

6) Additional costs - Scenario 2: without Brussels I nursery and primary on the Berkendael site in 2012/2013:

All remains identical to section 5), but no savings can be made for a Deputy Director serving also another school and additional costs will have to be budgeted for additional support staff (part-time nurse, librarian, concierge, IT expert, additional Religious Education classes as not possible to share with Brussels I primary) and fixed costs (cleaning, heating, electricity, security, garbage collection, etc.). This is likely to increase the additional costs significantly. The below figures do not yet take into account the savings that could be made in fixed costs in Laeken as there would be fewer pupils than

projected (less heating, electricity, cleaning, etc.) so the total figures would have to be somewhat reduced.

Rough estimate (w/o Brussels I)	2012 (4 Month)	2013	2014
Additional teachers	100,000	300,000	300,000
Support staff	150,000	450,000	450,000
Fixed costs	150,000	450,000	450,000
Add. Equipment	50,000	50,000	50,000
Savings removal	-20,000		
<i>Savings transport</i>	<i>-150,000</i>	<i>-450,000</i>	<i>-450,000</i>
Total	280,000	800,000	800,000

While evidently more costly, also this second scenario could still be financed without major problems out of a budget of €160,000,000 and no amendment to the 2012 budget should be necessary.

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