

Conference on The Future of the European Schools Brussels 14 March 2011

Report on Round Table 2 : Opening up of the System, Pedagogy, Reform of the European Baccalaureate.

How do we guarantee the continued high quality of the European Baccalaureate and the European education leading up to it?

The system needs to expand in order to ensure its survival. The recognition and credibility of the European Baccalaureate depends on its wider availability.

We discussed various aspects of this question whilst incorporating the valuable experience of those participants who are already working in the Accredited Schools.

Mondorf Criteria : the group suggested that they are not sufficient to ensure the quality and continuity of high level European education; we need to insist on more than one language section; teaching in/of 3 vehicular languages needs to be offered. Schools offering European education are not just language schools or international schools; we are talking about multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism. The European value added needs to be ensured.

Harmonisation between the schools is needed. The curriculum up to S5 allows for much flexibility so as to reflect the needs of the member state hosting the school. The Baccalaureate programme however requires very specific, prescriptive adherence to the curriculum and syllabi of the ES system. How can the quality be assured for the access to the Baccalaureate programme when the years below are not harmonised? Which measures can be taken to ensure the harmonisation between the schools?

Inspection is an important aspect of quality assurance. The inspection of teachers in Type 2/3 schools needs a stronger framework. How can inspectors ensure the quality of teaching if they are inspecting teachers of whom they do not speak the language or do not necessarily know the subject taught?

A mentoring or tutoring system between a Type 1 and Type 2 /3 school should be developed more stringently than is currently the case. This should not be limited to an initial start up period. This should form the basis of a long lasting relationship, a basis upon which teacher and pupil exchanges should be established. This could even be extended to a much broader context whereby a twinning programme could be envisaged.

The certification for the European Baccalaureate will from 2012 be signed centrally by the Secretary General as opposed to the individual schools as is currently the case. We have to ensure that the Baccalaureate delivered at the Accredited Schools is of the same level as at the Type 1 schools to guarantee high quality across all types of European Schools.

With regard to setting up Type 2/3 schools, there are vast differences between the national systems, each with their own peculiarities- it is clear that schools can be very different depending on the national system. It is vital to ensure that the Type 2/3 school to

be set up can be embedded into the national system with regard to the governance and financial aspects. From the pedagogical point of view the accreditation to the European Schools system should ensure the European curriculum culminating in the European Baccalaureate

The Type 2/3 schools need to on the one hand set up a network within which they can be represented and on the other hand they need to have a voice within the system. There must be a framework within which the schools can work together and present their common issues.

Linked to this is the absolute insistence that there has to be access to information- the group strongly requests not only for Learning Gateway to be accessible to all stakeholders in the Type 2/3 schools but also access to DOCEE for all stakeholders.

Innovation has a cost. If the system wants to open up financial consequences have to be accepted. We are not just referring to the per capita cost of a Cat 1 pupil contribution of the Commission (we are incidentally pleased to hear that the legal framework for this has now been confirmed and the funding should materialise soon), we are also referring to costs for all types of school, hidden costs throughout the system to cover aspects such as teacher support, exchanges, the establishment of a database to allow recruitment of former ES seconded teachers. Any investment in the opening up of the system is an investment in the system's future.

We are very aware of the current budgetary restraints. We are also very aware of the current issues in the existing Type 1 schools. We can only export the success of the existing schools if we first consolidate the fundamental aspects of functioning of the current system.

We asked the question what exactly the European Parliament intended when asking for the opening up of the system. We were reminded of the European Parliament's Resolutions and Reports of 2002 and 2005 with their requests for such an opening up to a wider population in response to the growing number of international schools with their focus on the English language and of the proposal at the March 2009 European Parliament Hearing to open a European School or schooling project in every member state. We also reiterated the need for DG Education and Culture to be involved in the further expansion of European education.

We concluded finally on the essence of the political will needed at local, national and intergovernmental level for the true expansion of the European education system. The Construction of Europe is the essential issue, the political will to create the European education system for European citizens. It is not the budget which will determine this. The budget needs to be used in function of Europe and in the execution of its political will, not the other way round.

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