

To the Members of the Board of Governors of
the European Schools

20 October 2006

Dear Sir/Madam,

At the Board of Governors session from 23 to 25 October 2006, there will be discussions on a site for the provisional school and certainly decisions could be taken regarding the offer made by Belgium.

It would seem that Belgium continues to propose solely the Berkendael site in spite of the opposition shown at the special session of the Board of Governors on 27 September 2006, following which it was requested that a new proposal be made containing new options. We can but note the negative attitude of Belgium on this issue and its lack of respect vis-à-vis its proudly boasted status as “Brussels, Capital of Europe” and its hosting of the families of those at the European Institutions.

The 3 Brussels APEEEs support the delegations in their decision dated 27/9/2006 on the inadequacy of the Berkendael site, given that:

- the provisional school is deemed to be the nucleus of the future Laeken school and it needs to be sited reasonably close to the Laeken site;
- a huge majority (95%) of the officials and servants at the Institutions, meeting on 19 September 2006 in a General Assembly said NO to Berkendael and demanded that Belgium make an alternative offer as a matter of the utmost urgency respecting the request sent to it by the Board of Governors, i.e. by proposing a site close to the future 4th school;
- Belgium continues to propose a site that has already been rejected by the Board of Governors in 1999 and by the parents on several occasions. The said site is not suitable for a European school, and opting for it would give rise to insurmountable practical difficulties for organising schooling and for the future transfer of pupils. Moreover, the offer to site prefabs in the already overcrowded school playgrounds or at Berkendael, a site which is far too small, betrays profound ignorance of the issues.

As regards any decision of the Board of Governors on the choice of a site, the 3 Brussels APEEEs insist that the following criteria must be taken into account:

- the site will be provisional and will be considered as the nucleus of Laeken, in line with the decision of the Board of Governors at its April 2006 meeting;
- the management and organisation etc. of the site will be completely autonomous;
- the transfer of children from other existing schools will be strictly forbidden;
- there will be no prefabs installed on the sites the existing schools.

Please find attached at annex the joint position of the 3 APEEEs (Bxl1, Bxl 2, Bxl 3) as submitted at the extraordinary session held on 27 September 2006, which sets out all our arguments on the issue.

Yours faithfully,

Cc Secretary General
Commissioner Kallas

(signed)
Alain Kruys
President
APEEE BXL 1

(signed)
Michaël Stenger
President
APEEE BXL 2

(signed)
Tony Bernard
President
APEEE BXL 3

Joint position of the 3 APEEEs

(Meeting of the Board of Governors of 27.9.06)

The 3 Brussels APEEEs maintain their position on the current proposal from the Belgian state in connection with the provisional school, namely:

- **Refusal of Berkendael as a provisional school for the following reasons:**
 - ? site is on the other side of town from the 4th school (Laeken);
 - ? not enough space to house the pupil numbers expected between now and the opening of the Laeken school;
 - ? infrastructure too small to provide normal levels of teaching and services (sports, canteen, extra-curricular, nursery school, etc);
 - ? entrance too narrow to allow proper school bus access;
 - ? existence of a prison next to the school, which could give rise to serious problems;
 - ? inconsistent with the Belgian policy of spreading officials across Brussels and the surrounding area (and thus siting the 4th school in Laeken, to the north of the city);
 - ? inconsistent attitude towards parents, who will be encouraged to settle in the north of Brussels for Bxl 4, whereas children will be obliged for several years to travel for hours in the buses to get to school and back home.

- **The site must remain provisional - otherwise:**
 - ? creation of an unsustainable and unbalanced situation;
 - ? separation of language sections over 2 sites, created a host of teaching problems;
 - ? inequalities in relation to the facilities available at the 2 sites,
 - ? inequalities in relation to the access to and quality levels of the various services at the 2 sites (canteen, transport, Césame, etc);
 - ? return to the arguing about which pupils should go on to Laeken (contrary to the decision adopted last April in The Hague).

- **No (new or additional) prefabs at the sites of the 3 existing schools (Bxl 1, Bxl 2, Bxl 3):**
 - ? this is unacceptable, as regards both the normal operation of the schools and safety considerations.

(signed)
Alain KRUYSS
President
APEEE BXL I

(signed)
Michaël STENGER
President
APEEE BXL II

(signed)
Tony Bernard
President
APEEE BXL III