



**General Assembly of the
Parents Association of the European School Brussels IV**

Brussels, CCAB, January 13th, 2010, 19:00

Minutes of Meeting

Agenda:

Part I (19.30 – 20.30): Open to the public

1. Introduction by Parents Association President
2. Appointment of the Electoral Board
3. Communication from:
 - General Secretariat of the European Schools (invited)
 - School Management
 - European Commission (invited)Questions/Answers
4. Presentation by Ms Bustorff, Director of ES Brussels IV, on the new element of the European School structure: The School Advisory Council

Part II (20.30 – 22.30): For Members only

5. Report on the Activities and Presentation of Accounts 2008-2009
Questions and Answers
VOTE on discharge of the Board on the Certified Accounts 2008-2009.
6. Presentation of the Budget 2009-2010 and of the resolutions for Reimbursement of debt and the Reserve Fund
Questions and Answers
VOTE on the Budget 2009 – 2010
VOTE on the resolution for Reimbursement of debt
VOTE on the resolution on the Reserve Fund
7. Election of new Board Members
8. Results of the election of the Board Members
9. AoB

Meeting details and attendance:

The meeting was held on January 13th at the Albert Borschette Conference Centre, rue Froissart, 36, B-1049 Brussels. The meeting started at 19:30 and ended at 23:15. The meeting was attended by 53 full members, some of which held proxies for voting from other full members, resulting in a total of 69 votes present. This number of votes satisfied the necessary quorum as requested by the statutes. Further, affiliate members and guests were present as well.



Part I (19.30 – 20.30): Open to the public

1 Introduction by Parents Association President

The President opened the meeting and welcomed the attendants to the 3rd regular General Assembly. She introduced the agenda of the General Assembly.

The documents were available in French and English. There was an interpretation service available from German, French, and English to French and English.

2 Appointment of the Electoral Board

The President proposed Katrin Mahrenholz, and Camilla.Gaudina-Wikstedt as members of the electoral board. Both are not members of the Board or candidate administrators.

Decision 100113-1, *The President's proposal the General Assembly to elect Katrin Mahrenholz and Camilla Gaudina-Wikstedt to the electoral board,*

was APPROVED by acclamation (unanimity).

3 Communication from the invited speakers

3.1 General Secretariat of the European Schools

The president explained that the Secretary General of the European schools, Mme. Christmann, had had another meeting abroad on that day and that she might join the Assembly later.

3.2 School Management

The school management was represented by the headmistress Mme. Bustorff. She recalled some recent events, such as the launching of the newsletter, the difficulty associated with the heavy snow fall in December, the Christmas concert.

The inscription policy for the next school year would force new enrolments to Brussels IV which was not the best situation but the over-population of the other schools left no choice. The school expected 200-250 new pupils. Berkendael 66 would be opened in June, which would offer sufficient capacity for the year 2010/2011. In general the situation regarding the school capacity in Brussels would be more critical for the school year 2011/2012. The Belgian authorities had proposed putting prefabricated class rooms on the Berkendael site as would be done for other schools as well. The school management was trying not to have these on the car park as this space is needed for the school buses.

The delegations appear to be ready to second teachers for the secondary school which is very positive. There will be a new Vice-Director and a new Director as the term of the current headmistress will come to an end after this school year.

The finalisation of the Berkendael 66 building was been delayed due to problems with the building permit. It would be ready for the school in June 2010. The final site in Laeken was promised for 2012.

The headmistress underlined that the relationship with the parents association was very good even if there are still elements to be achieved. She thanked the Parents Association for its work and expressed her best wishes for the schools future.

3.3 European Commission

The European Commission was represented by Mme. Verhoeven from the Unit responsible for European schools in the Directorate General for Human Resources and Security.

Mme. Verhoeven stated that the European Commission and the Parents Association had a common goal of defending the interests of the school and the children. Further, the Parents Association was of paramount importance for providing essential services, such as canteen and transport, contributing to the various working groups and facilitating contacts and communication between the school and the parents. She underlined the good relations of the Parents Association of the school Brussels IV.

At present the situation in Brussels is characterised by some difficult aspects: The frequent changes of Belgium governments which did not help the files advance quickly, the transition between the Barroso I and Barroso II Commissions, and, finally, the reorganisation of the Directorate General for Human Resources and Security.

Further, she summarised the status of the building Berkendael 66. The work should begin at the beginning of March and finish four months later. This building would provide capacity for class rooms which are needed for the start of the next school year in September 2010.

The Laeken site would be ready for the start of the school year 2012/2013. The preparatory works, such as the demolition works and the asbestos removal, would be finalised in March 2010. The offers for the construction had been received and the process was ongoing to have the work started in May 2010. The planning and the date for moving the school in 2012 had been confirmed by the Belgium administration, the "Régie des bâtiments".

The simulation predicted approximately 850 pupils for Brussels IV for the next school year. This increase could be accommodated by utilising Berkendael 66. In the following year, 2011/2012, the capacity of the four European schools would be surpassed. Finally, the Belgian state had acknowledged this fact and the Prime Minister had confirmed that Belgium would put additional infrastructure in place if needed. The type of additional infrastructure and locations would be subject to technical meetings involving the Parents Associations.

3.4 Questions and Answers

Q: Drawing on past experience and in view of the larger number of classes the estimate of 250 new pupils appears quite low. The prefabs will not extend the central infrastructure. There has been an investigation on the capacity of Berkendael 66.

Q: Will the Berkendael site be retained when Laeken opens?

Q: If the opening of Laeken is late, will the delay be one full school year or maybe less?

Q: The impact of the opening of Laeken on the bus service needs to be analysed, in order to allow parents to anticipate possible problems early.

Mme. Bustorff: The timetable for the next school year will be about the same as this year. Canteen schedule for nursery and primary classes will follow the same pattern as at present, secondary classes will have to fit in. The sport infrastructure still has some margin which can be exploited so complete sport courses will be feasible. The Berkendael 66 building will provide 16 classes and represent some breathing capacity for the school. The Halsdorff building will be used for the garderie, which will bring relief to the main building.

There were two more things which should have been said as part of the general statement: There will be an integration program for P5 and S1. This will be supported by teachers from Brussels II in order to smooth the change to secondary for pupils and



parents. A questionnaire has been published in order to collect feedback from the parents in order to direct planning and budget properly.

Mme. Verhoeven: The political discussion on a 5th school has just been initiated and the positions are under change. There is not yet any official position from the Belgian government.

For Laeken there has been a letter from the Prime Minister confirming the availability of the school in July 2012. The Commission is extremely vigilant on this point as the opening of Laeken is essential for the Brussels schools.

The organisation of transport is primarily a responsibility of the Parents Association, I will thus not answer. However, it is evident that one cannot wait until summer 2012 to tackle this aspect.

Q: The transport issue is not only for the Parents Association. There is a feasibility study required to assess if a self-paying transport system is realistic to establish a bus service to Laeken. The boundary conditions for this are driven by the political decisions of the Commission, in particular the inscription policy which changes every year. It may turn out that this transport service is not feasible for the currently dispersed school population. This might mean that some parents either have to move house or leave the European school system. These parents need some reliant planning now in order to cope with this issue in time. This study should be done by the Commission and not by the Parents Association. The Parents Association will have to clean up the mess but they cannot be held responsible for the policy.

Mme. Verhoeven: I will pass this message to my hierarchy.

Q: Will there be an analysis of the results of the parents survey made available?

Q: Has the régie des bâtiments confirmed the compliance to fire regulations in particular those parts of the building, which have been recently started to be used as class rooms, such as the third level?

Mme. Bustorff: The operational planning and scenario has been done for the full capacity of the school. The compliance to fire regulations was done accordingly assuming maximum capacity of pupils. An evacuation exercise will be done soon.

An executive summary of the analysis could be made available. More detailed analysis will need time, such analysis of distinct differences per language section.

Q: Has there been a formal request for the fifth school to the Belgian authorities. Has it specifically been asked to keep the Berkendael site open?

Q: Will the envisaged SMS-based alert system render the snow chain obsolete? Will there be coordination with the garderies? What are the lessons drawn from the December school closure?

Mme. Verhoeven: There has been a meeting between Vice President Kallas and Prime Minister Leterme on the subject of the fifth school. This has been part of an ongoing discussion. On the specific point of Berkendael, it is evident that in the case a fifth school will open, the Berkendael site will exist and will offer facilities needed for a school. Thus it will be part of the picture. For the time being no more information can be given on this subject.

Mme. Bustorff: The four European schools in Brussels had tried as much as possible to keep the schools open, independent from the issue of school transport. This concerned all regular activities, cultural activities and even the exams in case of the other schools.



New subjects were only started if sufficient number of pupils were present. In the cases where teachers could not reach the school replacements had to be found.

AS far as the SMS system is concerned it is to be used for messages of the School Administration, whereas the snow pyramid is aimed at the Parents Association transport system. The first attempts with the SMS system produced a delay of several hours between the launch of the message and its reception by the parents. The school has taken several measures together with the service provider and the system is now operational.

The President: The parents should prepare a snow pyramid in each class, as one should never rely on one communication channel alone. The Parents Association is also investigating the use of an SMS system, nevertheless, it is expensive and may be not reliable in acute situations.

Q: The school days per year should be minimum 180. The planning for next year shows that the two pedagogical days for the teacher training are not identified as holidays and count as part of the 180 days, even if the children do not have any lessons on those days and stay at home. Can the school please comment on this?

Mme. Bustorff: This is a difficult question and does not only concern Brussels IV. In my personal view we need treat this question on appropriate fora considering two elements: The number of days the school is offering, i.e. the 180 days or any other number, and the number of days each pupil has to attend, which is not necessary the same. This mechanism is used in some states and could offer some flexibility for school, as well as parents. Traditionally, the pedagogical days have been considered as school days.

Q: The parent regrets that Mrs. Christmann could not be here, as some of the questions, such as the transport or on the inscription policy, were rather directed to her.

Q: The question on the continuation of the Berkendael site has not been answered, or if the Commission has officially asked Belgium for this.

Mme. Verhoeven: This question has in fact been asked but the response has not been received and no decision has been taken yet.

Q: Is there an obligation just like in Belgian schools to have a person responsible for building security.

Mme. Bustorff: There is a security officer in the school who is, in fact, the administrator. For all the equipment, the building aspects and the minimum number of exercises the Belgian rules apply. Besides that, it appears most important to establish and train the procedures to be followed in case of an evacuation.

4 Ms Bustorff, Director of ES Brussels IV, on the new element of the European School structure: The School Advisory Council

Last April the Board of Governors decided on the introduction of the school autonomy for the school year 2009/2010. This is a quite short delay but there are not many changes and the autonomy is quite limited.

It is building on the elements which were present in the past, namely the Conseil d'Éducation for the nursery and primary, as well as for the secondary and an overall Conseil d'Éducation which is discussing the matter of the school in general. The two Conseils d'Éducation for nursery and primary, and the secondary section are kept and there is a new school advisory board, or Conseil Consultative de l'École, which will be the highest consultation body,

discussing the mid-term and long-term planning presented by the director. Apart from these bodies consultation takes place through informal channels.

The first meeting of the school advisory board, where the new rules have been explored.

Q: Today, we have only maternelle and primary section, but soon there will be a secondary section. How will the pupils themselves be represented in the Conseil d'Éducation?

Q: When the document on school priorities is presented, is it foreseen that the other members of the Conseil d'Éducation can make counter proposals?

Mme Bustorff: On the point of the pupil representation we will follow what is being done on the other schools. The pupil representatives will be there, but will have to leave the meeting in the case of topics that are not appropriate for them are being discussed.

In case there are alternative proposals, the Conseil d'Éducation will give its opinion as a collective. The final responsibility for these elements is the schools. However, the Director will have to justify, in the case of deviation from the Board's recommendation.

Part II (20.30 – 22.30): For Members only

5 Report on the Activities and Presentation of Accounts 2008-2009

The President explained that under this agenda item the Board would introduce its activity report as well as the certified accounts in one block. Following that there would be an opportunity to ask questions.

The activity report had been made available to the members of the association and, therefore, due to time constraints would not be presented in detail again.

In reading the report it had to be kept in mind that the school Brussels IV and its Parent Association are and have been in the past subject to a considerable uncertainties with respect to the number of pupils, the school site and the availability of resources needed. Further, there is the issue of the move to Laeken and the detailed circumstances under which this will take place, we have heard of this before.

The President thanked the Board members for their support and in particular the Parents Association staff. She took the opportunity to present the staff members and their portfolio: Finally, she thanked the parent's representatives for their volunteer work.

The treasurer presented the accounts, which had also been made available in advance to the members of the Association.

Both, the total revenue and expenses were higher than budgeted. Overall, there is a slight operational deficit of 4,500 €. General affairs were more or less as planned. Canteen has received higher turnover than anticipated and a slight loss. There is a higher share of internal staff which is an investment in the future and contributed to solving issues observed with the canteen operation in the past. For the transport the revenues were more or less as budgeted. The most interesting part here is the subsidy, without which we could not achieve a result of zero, i.e.: there was no loss on the transport service. Extra-curricular activities again were according to plan. There had been some revenue from activities from the previous year which led to an overall result of 26,902.09 €.

5.1 Questions and Answers

Q: It is foreseen to ask for 10 € in order to pay the Associations debt. Did the Board also consider creating reserves, for examples from the positive result of the extracurricular activities.



Q: Considering that transport service will at best make no losses in case the subsidy is going to be continued and that the canteen will make losses due to the high share of fixed cost, it is not clear how the Parents Association should make any revenue to pay back its debts in the foreseeable future.

It is positive that the revenue for the canteen was higher than anticipated due to the higher number of customers, such as the teachers. It would be interesting to provide a projection for the future expectations.

Q: The budget used was different from the budget approved by the General Assembly last year. It is the right of the Assembly to approve a budget. Some justification would be appreciated to justify why another budget was used after all.

Was there any more money borrowed last year? This is not fully clear from the documents provided.

The treasurer: The earlier questions mainly refer to the resolutions and the budget 2009/2010 which are treated afterwards.

For the budget, we did not really work on a different budget. Rather, the implementation of the budget exceeded the provisions. This was done out of the necessity to further invest in staff and material. The Board felt that there was no time to wait until the Assembly to hire additional staff which was not yet covered by revenues. It is true that this should not be the normal situation but it had been decided like this and it was up to the Assembly to give discharge to the Board on these accounts.

The debt is part of the balance and is currently 135,000 € and has not been increased in this year. There are provisions in the loan agreements with the Parents Associations from the other schools to go up to 300,000 € or even higher, but we don't think that we need any further loan and hopefully can start repaying the loan when we are supposed to do so, which is 2012.

The President: On the subject of the reserve, I would like to remind you that last year the Board submitted a resolution to the Assembly with the objective to transfer the profit of the extracurricular activities to the reserve funds. This resolution was not approved by the GA last year. I hope that we can achieve an improvement of this situation today.

On the increase of staff, it has to be said that in back in 2008 the majority of work was done by volunteers. This is not a sustainable situation in the long run, and the services cannot be closed down either. This is why staff had to be increased. As the school is still growing substantially and as there is limited experience up to now the staff needs are not always easy to predict.

I would like to underline that we keep the parents' money very much in mind and the Board and I, we are fully aware all expenses have to be paid in the end by all the parents, so there is still a lot of voluntary work contributed. On the other hand we have to become more professional in some areas and we cannot overload the board members in such a way so that we have no more volunteers for the association. Thus, a reasonable level of staff expenditure cannot be avoided.

Q: Why can the losses of certain services not be associated only to those parents who actually use them, such as canteen or transport.

The President: In principle everybody is paying for the service they are using. But in order to get the Parents Association in motion everybody has to contribute. We assume that even those parents who do not use a specific service have an interest in the basic functions of the Parents Association. It would therefore not be reasonable, if at all possible, to associate the individual costs back to every user.

Q: It is not true that everybody pays only for what he is using. The extracurricular activities are more expensive on Friday as the second bus has to be paid for through the fees of the activity. This is supporting the social ideals but is not acceptable.

The Treasurer: This concept has indeed been discussed. It was concluded that this would not necessarily be particularly unfair to those close to Berkendael, as after the move to Laeken the situation will be the opposite. Further, it turned out that it was not needed. The fees for the extracurricular activities on Friday did not include any share for the extra bus.

5.2 VOTE on discharge of the Board on the Certified Accounts 2008-2009.

Decision 100113-2, *The board's proposal to the General Assembly to discharge the board on the account of 2008/2009*

was APPROVED by majority.

(one abstentions, no dissentient votes)

6 Presentation of the Budget 2009-2010 and of the resolutions on the Reimbursement of debt and the Reserve Fund

In order to establish the budget the starting point was an estimation of the revenue from fees and other income, all this with some uncertainty. A slightly modest deficit could happen. A membership fee of 40€ was assumed. For the canteen a modest positive result was expected. In transport more pupils and more bus lines are assumed. A deficit of 63,000 € is expected. A higher loss was assumed when asking for the subsidy from the European Schools, which comprises provisions for 95,000 €. If all goes well the subsidy for 2009/2010 is lower than for the previous year. This tendency could help to make our case easier for a couple of year. In three or four years from now we could be in the situation to run a self-sufficient transport service. In case the subsidies would not be continued for the next years, self-paying parents would be charged the full cost of the service, which is around 2,080 €. The extracurricular activities have a higher number of course, thus higher income and higher cost. A slightly positive result is expected. 1,100,000 € leading to a deficit of around 64,000 € of which 63,000 € are stemming from the transport. In other words, if we get the transport subsidy from the European Schools the budget will be in balance.

6.1 Questions and Answers

No questions were received on the budget.

6.2 VOTE on the Budget 2009 – 2010

Decision 100113-3, *The board's proposal to the General Assembly for the budget 2009/2010*

was APPROVED by unanimity.

(no abstentions, no dissentient votes)

6.3 VOTE on the resolution on the Reserve Fund

This proposed resolution authorises the board to transfer any profits from any of the services to the reserve funds, which will be exclusively used to repay the loan or to overcome any temporary cash flow shortage.

The treasurer recalled that the association has an obligation towards the other Parents Associations who had given the loan in 2007. The loan agreement states that we should start repaying the loan after five years which is 2012. We will have to set aside money to be able to start paying then and to finish paying five years later.

Q: I am in principle fine with the resolution on the reserve, but I would like to question the increase of the membership fee by 10€. We should wait and see how the next year's income develops.

The Treasurer: There are two separate resolutions. This one is about the transfer of any positive result into the reserve fund; the next one is about a structured approach for each of the budget area to contribute. The increase of the membership fee is the main element of this approach which has to be approved by the General Assembly today. The others elements will be submitted for approval as part of the budget 2010/2011, i.e.: for next years General Assembly.

The President asked for a show of hands to see if the issue of the increase of 10 € is a wider concern or not. A few parents showed hands.

Q: Why do we need to hurry to prepare for the repayment of the loan if the school is still growing and we have already this year an even result?

The Treasurer: This is a matter of precautionary principle. Should the income of the services develop in a positive way there will be possibly useful ways to spend this money, looking at the example of the other schools.

Q: Couldn't this be a wrong signal for the Commission given the fact that we ask in parallel for a subsidy?

The Treasurer: Repaying the debt is an obligation for the association as a whole and each service has to contribute, including transport. The subsidy is a very specific tool to bring the costs for the self-paying parents down to a comparable level with the other schools.

Q: Could the Commission object as the part of the transport subsidy could be seen as going into other budget areas?

The Treasurer: The Commission and the Board of Governors have not objected that transport contribute to the general affairs budget which is also a global obligation.

The President: The loan has been used to a large extent to build up the transport service, thus it is only consequent to repay the loan partly from the transport budget.

Q: The other schools have been extremely loyal to us in terms of the loan, but as well with advice and support. Starting to prepare to repay the loan is a sign of good neighbourhood from our side.

Q: By approving this resolution do we bind next years General Assembly in an inappropriate way?

The President: We do not think that this resolution would bind next years assembly any further than the 135,000 € of debts itself. Further, the resolution addresses only the case of positive result of a service.

Q: It has to be recalled, that the repayment period was put into the agreement under the assumption that the Brussels IV would be a complete school at the Laeken site from 2009. As this is not the case there is some room with these delays as well. I would advocate, though, to make the 10 € share specifically dedicated for the loan repayment and limited until the debt is repaid.

The President proposed to take on board this suggestion.

Decision 100113-4, The board's proposal to the General Assembly for the Resolution on the Reserve Fund

was *APPROVED* by majority.

(two abstentions, one dissentient votes)

6.4 VOTE on the resolution for the Reimbursement of debt

Q: What does "include in the annual budgets of the APEEE, starting from budget 2010-2011, budget lines for the repayment of the loan" mean specifically?

The Treasurer: It means that these provisions are introduced as costs on the expenditure side and has to be balanced by revenues. This could lead in theory to a rise in fees but we do not expect that this will be needed if the number of pupils rises as predicted. The payment will be made to the reserve funds.

Q: I do not agree to the second part of the resolution, which allows the use of the reserve funds for cash flow shortages.

The Treasurer: In the theoretical case that you have a cash flow problem on the operational bank account it would be silly not to use the money available in a different account. This is really for emergencies, if the transport subsidy is not paid or similar. First thing when the cash flow problem would be solved is to restore the reserve funds.

Decision 100113-5, The board's proposal to the General Assembly for the Resolution on the Reimbursement of debt

was *APPROVED* by majority.

(twelve abstentions, two dissentient votes)

with the following amendments:

"decides also that the contribution of General Affairs shall be financed by a top-up of EUR 10 to the annual membership/administrative fee until the loan is paid"
;

7 Election of new Board Members

According to the statutes there are 15 vacant posts. There were six candidates known in advance and were present for the ballot. In addition there were several candidates from the floor. The list of candidates was finally established as follows:

1. MANGOLD -LE COQ Isabelle
2. O'BYRNE Aedín
3. PLUMHOFF Holger
4. SABATINI Roberto
5. ZUNKER Hugo
6. FABBRI Fabrizio
7. STREUL Carola

8. BELTRAME Francesca
9. SCAZZOLA Roberto
10. CENINI Antonio
11. SERGIO Giovanni

Each candidate was given the opportunity to introduce him-/herself.

Q: There are some members of the board not on the voting list. How is this organised?

The President: Each member is voted in for two years. So if the other board members want to continue they will have to be elected next year.

The President explained that there are more vacancies than candidates. It would be possible to vote for all candidates per acclamation. This would be only possible, if everybody would agree to this approach.

However, there was one objection and therefore the written vote per candidate was done.

The President thanked the translators for their service.

The President explained that there was one vote per person. There was the possibility to vote yes or no for each person.

8 Results of the election of the Board Members

65 voting sheets were received. The results per candidates were as follows:

Name	Language section	YES	NO	Abstentions
MANGOLD-LE COQ Isabelle	FR	65	-	-
O'BYRNE Aedín	EN	61	6	-
PLUMHOFF Holger	DE	59	5	1
SABATINI Roberto	IT	49	7	9
ZUNKER Hugo	DE	60	3	2
FABBRI Fabrizio	IT	48	11	6
STREUL Carola	DE	52	7	6
BELTRAME Francesca	IT	54	6	5
SCAZZOLA Roberto	IT	44	16	5
CENINI Antonio	IT	47	14	4
SERGIO Giovanni	IT	47	14	4

All candidates were elected for the Board of Administrators.

9 AoB

None.

A meeting record, a shortened version of these minutes has been prepared in order to comply with administrative obligations.

Date:

Date:

Erika Schulze
President

Hugo Zunker
Secretary