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 Directorate HR.C - HR Core Processes 2: Social Policy and Health
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NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL PARENTS' ASSOCIATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

The Commission is aware of certain information that is circulating, including information in certain schools that SEN services would be discontinued and that therapists' contracts terminated. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify the Commission position and budgetary stance as far as the budget line for pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) in the European Schools is concerned.

The purpose of the SEN programme in the European Schools is to ensure that the SEN pupils *"are able to participate actively in mainstream education and in the common activities of the year group and class, according to their abilities and with appropriate support"*. The Commission considers that the implementation of the SEN policy in the European Schools is of paramount importance.

The number of children receiving SEN support represented 2.57% of all pupils last school year. For the last two years, the execution of the budget line exceeds the amounts planned: SEN executed budget in 2008 represented 3.426.685 € and increased to 4.441.142 € in 2009.

At the meeting of the Board of Governors in April 2010, the overall budget for the European Schools for 2011 was approved with the favourable vote from the Commission. It included an increase of the overall EU contribution of 11 %. The EU contribution is yet to be approved by the budgetary authority (Council and Parliament). The SEN budget for 2011 represents 5.512.040 €, i.e. an increase of 25.8% compared to 2010. On the basis of these figures, let me emphasise the fact that the SEN budget for the European Schools for 2011 has thus not been reduced but on the contrary significantly increased.

This important increase of money takes place in a context of fiscal consolidation and budgetary rigour in a large number of Member States in the EU. Therefore, in this difficult context, these credits must be used in the most efficient manner within the current legal framework. Depending on the specific nature of the SEN expenses, the budget in an individual school can vary considerably from year to year according to the individual pupils' needs and the budget allocation has to be adjusted depending on the real needs for the year in question. The Directors of the schools need to show good judgement in the management of the budget to be used to provide professional qualified support to the children concerned.

In the autumn a reflection will take place, with the participation of the parents' associations, to clarify the rules applicable to SEN contracts in order to ensure equal treatment between the schools and that the resources are used in the most efficient way and closely monitored for the future. This topic will then be discussed in December 2010 by the Board of Governors for potential implementation in the 2012 budget

I am sending a copy of this note to Mrs Christmann and asking her to forward it to the Directors of all European Schools.


 Marco-Umberto MORICCA

Cc: Mrs. Renée Christmann, Secretary General of the European Schools