

Brussels Thursday, 2nd May 2024
Teams Video Meeting: 12:38-14:54

Present: Johanna Alkhafaji, Rachel Aviotti, Marzia Brofferio, Pavlina Canova, Marianna Cosco, Alexandre Grigorescu-Negri, Dan Nicolae, Stefan Petrovski, Ionut-Adrian Sandu, Marius Serbeniuc, Jordan Toujarov, Pénélope Vlandas.

Absent: Dana Adriana Puia Morel.

Excused: Angela Guarino, Noémie Hangya-Lachmann, Josephine Norris, Jane Okafor, Tzvetomir Penev, Adja Awa Sissoko, Diane Werhert.

Proxy: Noémie Hangya-Lachmann to Rachel Aviotti, Tzvetomir Penev to Dan Nicolae, Adja Awa Sissoko to Stefan Petrovski, Diane Werhert to Johanna Alkhafaji, Marianna Cosco to Dan Nicolae from 1:47 pm, Marzia Brofferio to Johanna Alkhafaji from 1:48 pm.

Guest: excused, Eric Rega, the Director of the APEEE of Brussels IV, present: Manuela Pamio, secretariat of the APEEE of Brussels IV.

Minutes 2.05.2024

The quorum is reached. The President, Dan Nicolae, welcomes all attendees and chairs the Board meeting.

1. Adoption of the Agenda.

The agenda is adopted.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of 11/04/2024.

The Board Minutes of 11/04/2024 are adopted without any remarks.

3. Somerfesto & Open Day.

Johanna Alkhafaji, the Vice-President for Communication, asks Board members to volunteer for the APEEE stand at the following events: Somerfesto on 25/05/2024 & Open Day on 29/05/2024.

She outlines that it is important that Board members respond to parents' questions and represent the APEEE at these events. Ms Alkhafaji clarifies that the APEEE stand at the Somerfesto will be composed of Board members who will answer parents' questions about Somerfesto (such as: what it is, where the stands are) and the APEEE in general and APEEE services will also be represented.

During the Open Day, which is an event organized by the EEBIV for new parents, there will be several stands. The European Commission (OIB) will have its stand to provide information on childcare facilities, the APEEE will have a general stand where Board members will represent the APEEE, and section representatives will connect new parents with their language sections and the APEEE service managers

will have their stands together to answer parents' questions related to the APEEE services (transport, canteen services, and extra-curricular activities).

She will post the links for the APEEE stand table on the APEEE chat and will invite Board members to sign up. Ms Vlandas thinks that it could be useful to have an online information meeting for new parents as organised in the past by the ADP Crèches-Garderies on the practical aspects of the European schools.

There is a brief discussion on whether or not to organize an online information meeting for parents in parallel with the Open Day.

4. Updating the APEEE Website.

Ms Alkhafaji would like to work together with the APEEE Communication Officer on the overhaul of the APEEE website over the summer so that a new website is available for the start of the next academic year. She clarifies that the idea is not to completely overhaul the website but to improve the content and the way it is displayed without changing the structure or colours of the APEEE website. It is important to see what information needs to be updated or removed and how to make it easily accessible to parents.

Action: All Board members are invited to review the current APEEE website and share their suggestions for improving the APEEE website on a dedicated Wiki page.

The new APEEE logo is already visible on the APEEE website. Mr Nicolae explains that the new APEEE logo will be integrated into the Together School application in June.

5. Finances:

-Board Vote: Budget Principle (Share of management fees and minimum 2% net profit).

-Board Vote: Stop or continue all special conditions for each service.

Last year, the Board discussed some budgetary principles for the preparation of the 2023-2024 budget. Stefan Petrovski, the Treasurer, emphasizes that the APEEE needs to establish some budget's principles to facilitate the preparation of the budget, the management of financial obligations, and the analysis of results by activities/events. The Treasurer would like the Board to make a clear decision on each budgetary principle. He therefore posted two votes on Wiki page with the relevant information. As proposed by the President, the budget principles will be discussed at today's meeting, and adopted by written procedure on Wiki.

Mr Petrovski outlines that the 2023-2024 budget was based on a minimum of 2% net profit for each service (canteen, transport, and extracurricular activities). This was implemented to increase our level of reserves needed to cover unforeseen crises (lockdown, APEEE closure, etc.) and to invest in the services, events, etc. The first proposal is to fix this compulsory principle of a minimum of 2% net profit for each service and event, except for the Community Fund and the Social Fund in the APEEE budget.

Mr Petrovski explains that this minimum net of 2% per service/event should be our target when we prepare the budget and any derogation of this 2% should be justified by the activity/service and agreed by the Board.

He clarifies that compensation for losses is not permitted between activities and events and we are using the APEEE reserves to cover the loss of the canteen service.

He states that the APEEE is under no legal requirement to establish reserves, but it is important to set up reserves to face crisis or emergency liquidity problems. In the event of a surplus in the future, the APEEE Board could decide to reimburse the difference to parents or reduce prices (calculation and conditions to be defined).

The second proposal is to share the management fees between each service (canteen, transport, and extra-curricular activities) and events (Sommerfest, etc.) except for the Community Fund and the Social Fund, according to the percentage of APEEE revenues generated by each service/event.

It is clarified that the management fees are those costs that are not directly related to a service/department (for example Director/HR, Accountant /Communication, Secretary, APEEE structure, IT furniture etc, and additional fees, auditors, lawyers etc) but are related to the APEEE structure. The Management fees are essential for the functioning of the APEEE.

Mr Petrovski informs the Board that the management fees are currently shared only between the three services (canteen, transport, and extra-curricular activities) based on a percentage of the total revenues of the APEEE. He proposes to include all services and events, except for the Community Fund and the Social Fund, in the share of these management fees and to confirm that the share should be calculated based on the percentage of APEEE's revenues. The President and the Treasurer recommend adopting this type of calculation because it is the simplest. Mr Serbeniuc is in favour of this budget's principle but considers that this distribution should be applied at the end of the accounting year when we will know all the extra activities/events to be used for this sharing of the management fees and their revenues.

The Treasurer explains that the canteen service provides meals not only to pupils but also to teachers (Resto prof) and takes part in external events, organized by the EEBIV. All these activities require additional work for the APEEE staff. He would like to know whether these special activities should continue to be provided or whether the canteen service should focus only on pupils.

He outlines that the APEEE needs to ensure that the current participation of the canteen service to provide meals to teachers and the participation in external events are agreed by Board members and do not generate financial losses to the APEEE. The proposal is to agree on the participation of canteen service to the 'Resto Prof' and the external events with a minimum of 2 % net profit.

It is agreed that:

- The Treasurer will split the vote on the special conditions for the canteen service into two questions one for the 'Resto Prof' and the other for the external events.
- The vote will be postponed to a later date because the Board has open questions requiring prior discussion or explanations with the Board member responsible for the canteen service.

The Treasurer recalls that in December 2023, the Board decided to stop offering free meals for Ukrainian (UA) pupils and to allow UA families to apply for financial assistance from the Social Fund in case of financial hardship. He asks all Board members to decide whether parents should continue to finance transport, extra-curricular activities, and the annual APEEE membership fee for free to Ukrainian pupils in the 2024-2025 academic year. For information, the APEEE of Brussels III has decided to no longer offer its services free of charge to Ukrainian pupils.

The Treasurer proposes the following solutions to mitigate the financial impact for Ukrainian families in the event that services are no longer offered free of charge:

- The modification will be notified in advance to UA families and will start only from the 2024-2025 school year.
- The UA families will have the possibility to apply to the Social Fund for financial support in line with Article 8 of the APEEE Social Fund rules.
- The APEEE could open a dedicated fund financed by voluntary contributions from all parents.

Ms Vlandas thinks that the APEEE could offer its services for free to UA pupils for a limited period of 6 months. She informs the Board that the OIB childcare facilities are free of charge for UA pupils hosted by parents working for EU institutions. She suggests that we check with the PMO whether they would be willing to cover these costs for UA families before deciding to stop supporting them through the APEEE.

At the end of the discussion, the Board decided to open the vote on the budget principles, with the exception of the special conditions for the canteen, on Wiki until 15th May 2024.

- To be discussed:

-Idea: Buy gifts (as chocolates) to all staff (+sub-contractors) Canteen, Transport & Extracurricular to thank for the school year (to be given in June each year)?

The Board secretary clarified that this idea had been rejected by the Board at a previous meeting. It was decided to offer the APEEE bottles with the new logo to the APEEE staff and to organize a party/barbecue in June for the APEEE staff & Board to thank them for the school year.

6. AOB:

-Call for volunteers (Board members): open position Transport Responsible.

The President kindly agreed to fill this position as an interim solution. He emphasises that transport is a very important service, and we need to appoint a Board member responsible for this service as soon as possible.

The Vice-President for Communication informs the Board that Ms Norris, who is no longer available for this position, is happy to offer her assistance for the handover.

-Update on the recruitment of the APEEE Director.

Mr Nicolae gives a brief update on the recruitment of the APEEE's Director. He explains that the job advertisement was published on the APEEE website this morning and it will be posted on LinkedIn this afternoon. The deadline for applying for the position is 15 days, and then there will be two rounds of interviews. The President announces that the recruitment panel is composed of the following Board members: Marianna Cosco, Alexandre Grigorescu-Negri, Angela Guarino, Dan Nicolae et Josephine Norris. The possibility of having an internal interim solution if the successful candidate is not immediately available is briefly discussed.

-Steering Committee meeting for the Fifth European School.

Dan Nicolae gives a brief report on the Steering Committee meeting. Different topics were discussed: the opening of the 5th European school, and the overcrowding of the Brussels European schools. The fifth European School of Brussels V is expected to open as of September 2028, but they will launch a proposal to open it on 1st September 2030. The President of the APEEE will share the Minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting with the Board when available.

Action: Dan Nicolae will send the Minutes of the Steering meeting to the Treasurer to publish them on Wiki for Board's consultation.

-WIKI Request.

As requested, the Board agrees to give Johanna Alkhafaji, the back-up secretary, the same Wiki rights as Pavlina Canova, the Board secretary. The President outlines that the Board secretary is a key position, and it is beneficial that they have the same rights on Wiki not only to ensure business continuity but also to split their tasks.

The Board meeting ends at 2:54 pm.