



Ref.: 2019-10-D-17-en-3

Orig.:EN



## **Report of the Chair of the Budgetary Committee for the year 2018-2019**

Approved by the Board of Governors, 03-05 December 2019, Brussels

## **Report of the Chair of the Budgetary Committee of the European Schools under Greek Presidency 2018-2019 school year**

I would like to start this report by expressing my warmest thanks to all those who contributed to the smooth and constructive meetings of the Budgetary Committee during the Greek Presidency.

This Presidency was my first contact ever with the European School system. This means I knew nothing about their structure, their way of operation, even their existence. The challenge was great but I have been fortunate enough and pleased to be able to rely on the courteous, willing and highly trained staff of the Office of the Secretary-General, and in particular the Secretary-General himself, Mr. Marcheggiano, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Beckman, the Head of the Accountancy Unit, Mr. Escudero Bustamante, Ms Matundu Luzolo and Ms Baudson.

I am extremely grateful to them and to the rest of their team.

The Budgetary Committee's main responsibilities, according to its Rules of Procedure, consist in: a) addressing all budgetary and financial questions and taking decisions on them within the framework of the total budget approved by the Board of Governors, b) addressing administrative and legal questions requiring a decision of the Board of Governors and expressing an opinion for the favour of the latter, c) defining the general budgetary objectives for Type I schools and evaluating their implementation by the schools and d) reporting annually to the Board of Governors.

Within this framework, the Budgetary Committee met on 6 and 7 November 2018 and on 5 and 6 March 2019, during the school year of the Greek Presidency.

At these meetings, the Budgetary Committee has dealt with a large number of issues, many of which were quite complex and controversial, but I am delighted to say that, after hard work, long discussions sometimes, compromises, yet mainly positive contribution from all parties involved, was able to have a successful outcome in most cases.

Thus, regarding the proposals to increase the attractiveness of the European Schools for teaching staff, the Budgetary Committee expressed various views and its comments were forwarded to the Enlarged Presidency Working Group to review and to present a revised version to the Board of Governors for approval in April. The Board of Governors examined and discussed the revised proposals and decided to commit itself to increasing the attractiveness of the European Schools for teaching staff in order to keep the European Schools competitive and to ensure a high standard of teaching and learning. In the light of that commitment, the Board of Governors endorsed, by a two-thirds majority, the proposals made.

Similarly, on the long-discussing issue of the revision of the cost sharing mechanism of seconded staff among the Member States to a fairer one for the latter and closer to the real needs in terms of teaching staff required, the Budgetary Committee expressed finally a favourable opinion with some reservations and, at the end, a final model was adopted by the Board of Governors through a written procedure in June.

In addition, the Budgetary Committee expressed a favourable opinion on the cost sharing mechanism for Accredited European Schools to the Board of Governors. The latter approved the method for calculation of the cost neutrality of the Accredited European Schools, with entry into force at the beginning of the 2020 financial year.

Furthermore, the Budgetary Committee looked at the development of the 2018 budget after the amending budgets, as well as, the follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the audits (Court of Auditors and Internal Audit Service). The improvements made were recognized and

welcomed but there are still some continuing weaknesses, especially in the management of extra-budgetary accounts and provisional commitments, which need to be tackled.

The Budgetary Committee approved also the transfer of appropriations for the financial year 2019 at European School Brussels I from the line “Expenditure related to Locally Recruited Teachers” to the line “Pedagogical expenditure” to cover the equipment of 7 extra classrooms in September 2019 due to the expected significant increase in pupils.

Moreover, the Budgetary Committee agreed to the first amending budget of 2019, as well as, the preliminary draft 2020 budget, which is 4% higher than the 2019 budget, mainly due to increases in staff expenditure.

The Budgetary Committee was also in favour, with the exception of the European Commission, of the discharge to the Authorizing Officers and the Administrative Boards of the European Schools for implementation of the 2017 budget. It has to be noted that, for the third consecutive year, the consolidated financial statements were free from material error.

In the same vein, the Budgetary Committee had the opportunity to take good note of the annual report of the Internal Audit Service, the report of the Working Group on BREXIT, the annual report of the Financial Controller and the annual plan for ex-post controls of the Financial Control Unit for the year 2019.

It has to be noted that the Budgetary Committee responded positively to the revised Charter of tasks and responsibilities of the Central Accounting Officer, his assistants and the correspondents. Similarly, after long discussions and many revisions, there was a positive response from the Budgetary Committee, and a subsequent adoption by the Board of Governors in April, on the proposed new salary scale structure, career progression prospects and merit-based evaluations for the Administrative and Ancillary Staff of the European Schools.

The Budgetary Committee looked at a number of more pedagogical matters, as well.

The proposal to set up a working group for the induction of new teachers in the European Schools and consequently to revise the relevant document in force since 1998, was adopted by the Budgetary Committee. Similarly, the proposed changes to digital competence training of pedagogical staff of the European Schools, in the context of continuous professional development, were accepted by the Budgetary Committee.

The Budgetary Committee endorsed also the proposal to create a coordination function for the organization of language tests and the creation of a timetable reduction of a maximum of 72 hours per school year for the coordination of language tests in the Brussels European Schools. Meanwhile, the Budgetary Committee expressed a favourable opinion on the proposal for a Language Policy in the European Schools.

The Budgetary Committee had the opportunity to scrutinise the draft report on the 2018 Bacculaureate, as well as, the report on evaluation of the implementation of the Educational Support Policy and the report on Inclusive Education in the European Schools and it expressed a favourable opinion on the Draft Action Plan addressing the recommendations of both last reports.

Finally, regarding the proposed creation of a Lithuanian language section at European School Luxembourg I, as well as, the request for admission in Category I of children of trainee members of the judiciary seconded for a period of at least one year to the Court of Justice of the European Union, with retroactive effect, the Budgetary Committee was favourably positioned.

The tasks and challenges faced by the Budgetary Committee in 2018-2019 school year were numerous and multilevel. Among them, several require monitoring or completion. For instance, the implementation of the measures adopted to attract and retain duly qualified staff, the new cost sharing

mechanism of seconded staff among the Member States, the adopted mechanism for a real cost neutrality of the Accredited European Schools, or the new evaluation and promotion policy of the Administrative and Ancillary Staff of the European Schools, need to be monitored and their impact must be reported in the next couple of years for evaluation. The new regulations for the accreditation and the audits of the Accredited European Schools need to be completed. BREXIT is still an open issue.

However, I find it very encouraging to experience the enthusiasm and desire to find common ground among my colleagues during the budgetary meetings. I am convinced that the Budgetary Committee has done a fruitful and constructive work for the European Schools' greater good. I have no doubt that the young Spanish Presidency will do exactly the same and I would like to wish it every success for the current 2019-2020 school year.

Thank you for your remarkable commitment, great support and hard work. It was a pleasure to chair the meetings and work closely with all of you.

Ioanna Soulioti

Chair of the Budgetary Committee  
Greek Presidency of the European Schools 2018-19

November 2019

### **OPINION OF THE BUDGETARY COMMITTEE**

The Budgetary Committee duly noted the Report and thanked the Greek Presidency for the good work done.

The Budgetary Committee invites the Board of Governors to approve the report.

### **OPINION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

The Board of Governors took note of and approved the report of the Greek Chair of the Budgetary Committee for the 2018-2019 school year.