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Annual Activity Report 2020 of the Office of the Secretary-General

Approved by the Board of Governors of the European Schools
at its meeting on 13-15 April 2021 (Brussels)

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A. Mission statement

The European Schools are educational institutions set up in the European Union's Member States.

The purpose of the Schools is to educate together children of the staff of the European communities.

Convention defining the statute of the European Schools

The mission of the European Schools is to provide all pupils with multilingual broad education of high quality from early education to secondary school, and to equip upper secondary students to adult life and form a basis for further learning.

Decision of the Board of Governors

B. Introduction

According to Article 33.2 of the Financial Regulation (FR) each School and the Office of the Secretary-General shall draw up an Annual Activity Report.

The objective of the Annual Activity Report of the Office of the Secretary-General (AAR OSG 2020) is to present to the stakeholders a report for the calendar year 2020 on the overall management of the Office, including pedagogical, financial and administrative aspects. It presents a summary of the ongoing activities of each unit as well as the achievements of objectives set for 2020. It also concludes on budget implementation, sound financial management and the internal control system.

C. Quality assurance in pedagogy

Achievements in the ongoing business

1. Pedagogical Development Unit

General

The main role of the Pedagogical Development Unit (PDU) as the guarantor of the system's pedagogical coherence is to facilitate and monitor the proper operation of decision-making and follow-up on the decisions taken by the competent organs, namely the Boards of Inspectors, the Joint Teaching Committee, the Budgetary Committee and the Board of Governors, in related areas. The Unit, under the auspices of the Presidency and in collaboration with the Boards of Inspectors, is responsible for the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decisions and the actions taken as a result of decisions.

Since the term of office of the Presidencies of the European Schools covers two school years and since the planning of priorities and the different actions are aligned with the Presidencies' school year planning, the priorities of the calendar year 2020 reflect the objectives of both the Spanish and French Presidencies. Thus, the continuity of the priorities is illustrated in the following summary, which nevertheless focuses on activities in the financial (calendar) year 2020.

Challenges related to Covid-19

In 2020, the European School system faced an unprecedented challenge, when in March some schools had to suspend regular *in situ* teaching and change to a distance teaching and learning scenario. In a short time, several schools had to follow the same regime. The unexpected change meant a huge task for the PDU, which had to support schools in many ways. The PDU's main responsibilities in this respect were the following:

- Creating and issuing guidelines to support schools in distance teaching (2020-03-D-11, 7 versions altogether, updates)
- Supporting the Deputy Secretary-General in coordination of the Covid-19 Task Force, starting from June 2020
- Supporting the Covid-19 Task Force, in the following areas in particular:

- Quality Assurance (Assessment, Educational Support, Distance Teaching, Training and Primary)
 - Inspectors' activities (WSI, Audits, evaluations)
 - Supporting the Core Team of the Task Force
 - Preparation of documents for the extraordinary JTC meeting in June and the extraordinary BoG meetings in August and October 2020.
- With the support of the IT-PEDA WG, the creation of a *Distance Learning Policy for the European Schools* (2020-09-D-10)
 - Memorandum 2020-11-M-1-en *Organisation of the B Tests and Examinations in S4, S5 and S6 during the first semester 2020-2021*
 - Memorandum 2020-11-M-2: *Organisation of the Pre-Baccalaureate Examinations in S7 during the school year 2020-2021*

Overview of tasks and activities related to the priorities of the Spanish and French Presidencies

The following table gives an overview of the priorities that gave direction to the PDU in the annual activities.

January-August 2020 (Spanish Presidency)

A non-exhaustive list of priorities of the Spanish Presidency concerning continuous pedagogical development and influencing the PDU's activities (2019-2020)¹:

| | Priority | Major results and PDU activities |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | <p>Implementation of the New Marking System</p> <p>Follow-up (Baccalaureate cycle)</p> <p>Related document: 2017-05-D-29</p> | <p>New documents (generic and specific matrix, sample paper and marking scheme) for the Baccalaureate prepared by Inspectors and published on the website. In total, 76 documents were prepared.</p> <p>The PDU was responsible for coordinating and assisting the Quality Assurance WG in the quality checks on these documents.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Reform of the European Schools' Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - harmonisation of S6 tests, - introduction of a cross-curricular project in S7/S6 (the proposal is not restricted to S7), - implementation of a harmonised template for teachers' planning | <p>Due to the crisis related to the pandemic, it was not possible for the Assessment Secondary WG and the Pedagogical Reform WG to convene in the second semester of 2019-2020, but the work was continued in the first semester of the new school year, under the responsibility of the French Presidency.</p> <p>Due to the crisis, implementation of harmonised planning was postponed. The introduction of the</p> |

¹ This table refers only to those priorities which were directly supported by the PDU, the activities in the area of Educational Support being mentioned in another section of the Annual Activity Report.

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| | | 8 KC into the pedagogical planning template was approved (2020-01-D-61). |
| 3. | <p>Language Policy in the European Schools</p> <p>Introducing HCL in the group of Languages 2 and Introducing L3 in Primary 4-5</p> | <p><i>Including the Host Country Language in the group of Languages 2 (2020-01-D-25)</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>Introduction of Language 3 in P4 (2020-01-D-26)</i></p> <p>The two documents were prepared by the Pedagogical Reform WG and submitted to the JBI and JTC in February. Financial statements were prepared for the Budgetary Committee (March 2020) and the proposals were submitted to the BoG.</p> <p>The HCL proposal was approved. A memorandum was published for the schools' attention by the PDU.</p> <p>The L3 proposal was not approved. The WG will have to revisit the proposal.</p> <p>The <i>Guidelines for testing dominant language in N1 and N2</i> document (2020-01-D-63) was finally approved in October 2020.</p> |
| 4. | <p>ICT Policy of the ES</p> | <p><i>Guidelines for the pedagogical use of mobile devices in the European Schools (2020-01-D-14)</i> and <i>Digital terminology for the ES (2020-01-D-37)</i></p> <p><i>System-level online training calendar (2020-08-D-7)</i></p> <p><i>Online professional communities (2020-08-D-10)</i></p> <p>As a response to the Covid-19 crisis:</p> |

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| | | <p><i>Distance learning recommendations for course continuity during temporary suspension of obligatory regular attendance of pupils at school</i> (by the PDU) (2020-03-D-11).</p> <p><i>Distance Learning Policy for the European Schools</i> (2020-09-D-10)</p> |
| 5. | <p>Roles and duties of Inspectors</p> <p>Aims:</p> <p>Review the ES Inspectors' general duties, workload and incompatibilities.</p> <p>Support the work of the Board of Inspectors (BI).</p> <p>Provide the necessary human resources to allow the BI to carry out its tasks.</p> | <p>The following documents were submitted to the Boards:</p> <p><i>Roles and duties of the European Schools' Inspectors</i> (2018-09-D-35) – document approved by the BoG in April 2020.</p> <p><i>Establishing a Planning Committee to plan Inspectors' activities</i> (2020-09-D-29) – document on which the JBI and JTC expressed a positive opinion in October 2020.</p> <p><i>Inspectorate</i> (2020-09-D-35) – document on which the JBI expressed a positive opinion in October 2020</p> |

September to December 2020 (French Presidency)

A non-exhaustive list of priorities of the French Presidency concerning continuous pedagogical development and influencing in particular the activities of the PDU²:

| | Priority | Results and PDU activities |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | <p>Sustainable Development in the ES</p> <p>1.1 Make sustainable development visible in primary and secondary educational content,</p> <p>1.2 Make the initiatives taken at the local level visible, in all cycles,</p> <p>1.3 Develop proposals for strengthening the civic competence European dimension,</p> <p>1.4 Consider an event that highlights sustainable development,</p> <p>1.5 Draw up a sustainable development charter for the involvement of new AES.</p> | <p>Sustainable Development WG started in 2021 only (ongoing activities)</p> <p>Pedagogical Reform WG Task Force</p> <p>See remark for 1.1 and 1.2</p> |

² This table refers only to those priorities which were directly supported by the PDU, the activities in the area of Educational Support being mentioned in another section of the Annual Activity Report.

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| 2. | <p>The European Baccalaureate's excellence</p> <p>2.1 Support implementation of the New Marking System for the June 2021 session and ensure its recognition by European and foreign universities,</p> <p>2.2 Produce a brochure for the European Baccalaureate for universities both within and outside Europe and consider tools for monitoring the future of ES graduates,</p> | <p>Objectives followed up by the Baccalaureate Unit</p> |
| 3. | <p>Clarify and reassert the role and duties of ES Inspectors in quality assurance of the education provided in ES.</p> | <p><i>Roles and duties of the European Schools' Inspectors (2018-09-D-35) – document approved by the BoG in April 2020.</i></p> <p><i>Establishing a Planning Committee to plan Inspectors' activities (2020-09-D-29-en-1) – decision expected in February 2021.</i></p> <p><i>Inspectorate (2020-09-D-35) – decision expected in December 2021 (BoG)</i></p> |

Main activities supporting the Boards of Inspectors³:

A) During 2020, the Pedagogical Development Unit organised and coordinated in particular:

- 9 regular (large) pedagogical meetings: 2 meetings of the Board of Inspectors (Nursery and Primary), 3 meetings of the Board of Inspectors (Secondary), 2 meetings of the Joint Board of Inspectors and 2 meetings of the Joint Teaching Committee. Extraordinary meetings of the BIS, JBI and JTC related to the Covid-19 crisis.
- Pedagogical meetings, Working Groups' meetings and training courses as from March 2020 were held online.
- 56 operational pedagogical Working Groups chaired mainly by the Inspectors, which held 166 meetings in all, amounting to 196.5 meeting days in total.
- Before March 2020, 1 'Train the Trainers' courses in the Primary cycle and 3 in the Secondary cycle. Follow-up on such courses took place in the schools themselves. AES were also involved in some training courses.
- 4 online decentralised training courses for all teachers based on the new CPD concept (including the New Marking System and subject training courses (Scientific subjects). AES were also involved in some training courses.
- 1 online decentralised training course for all teachers in Primary cycle (Mathematics).
- 3 online 'Train the Trainers' courses in Primary.
- 6 online 'Train the Trainers' courses in the Secondary cycle relating to implementation of new syllabuses or subject training courses.
- 17 online 'Train the Trainers' courses in the Secondary cycle relating to the New Marking System and the training of Bac experts.
- 3 Attainment Descriptors for subjects and 4 new syllabuses were approved.

³ Final and definitive figures for the financial year 2020 will be available in the Report of the Secretary-General for the BoG's April 2021 meeting. In addition, a document setting out the Inspectors' activities, which is regularly updated and approved by the Joint Board of Inspectors, was presented to the Teaching Committees and to the Board of Governors for their information.

- No Whole School Inspection visits took place. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, both planned Whole School Inspections were postponed until further notice.
- 4 Follow-up Inspections were conducted remotely.
- Personalised reception and induction of new Inspectors.
- In-service training for new Inspectors (O365) and regular assistance on SharePoint and MS Teams.
- Logistic support for organisation of the *Latinum Europaeum* examination at the end of year 5 – Memo 2020-05-M-7 linked with the specific situation.
- Logistic support for the Human Sciences (S3) book *'The Mediterranean World'*.
- Due to the introduction of the New Marking System (NMS) in the Baccalaureate cycle and the first Baccalaureate according to the NMS in 2021, as an element for 2020, the PDU supported production of the NMS Baccalaureate material (matrices, sample papers, etc., for 75 different subjects) and the update of 149 syllabuses and related documents.
- Support for the coordination of the revision of 9 syllabuses and support for the QA Working Group for the checking of these syllabuses (expected to be approved in February 2021).

Support for the Deputy Secretary-General for the 'Harmonisation of Events' Working Group: *'Common Framework for 'Events' organised by the ES' (2019-12-D-36) and 'Proposal for Amending the Document 'Internal Structures in the Nursery, Primary and Secondary Cycles' - Annex 1 to document 2019-04-D-13' (2020-01-D-35)* – Approved by the BoG in April 2020.

Support for the planning and budgeting of all of the Inspectors' activities is also provided by the Pedagogical Development Unit.

The Pedagogical Development Unit was also responsible for following up on the documents approved by the Joint Board of Inspectors, the Joint Teaching Committee, the Budgetary Committee and the Board of Governors – resulting from the different working groups (planning, preparation, follow-up, updating documents and general assistance).

B) Legal and administrative follow-up on certain pedagogical documents approved by the different Boards/Committees and in addition, budgetary follow-up on some of them:

- Planning and budgetary estimate
 - of the Inspectors' activities, meetings
 - for the different Whole School Inspections
 - for 'evaluation of locally recruited teachers' missions
 - for the different working groups coordinated by the Pedagogical Development Unit
 - for various centralised and decentralised in-service training courses
 - for the additional measures involved in implementation of the New Marking System
 - for intervention of external experts in certain working groups
 - for the new proposal concerning amendment of the Internal Structures relating to the organisation of Events in the ES.
- Monitoring, control and checking of invoices sent by Schools (teachers' participation in INSET).
- Support for the call for tenders for the new Intermath digital tool.

C) Follow-up on the Multi-Annual ICT plan and supporting Inspectors and schools in the area of distance teaching and learning.

- Inspectors' Website: development of the dedicated SharePoint.
- PDU SharePoint: development of the dedicated SharePoint for the Pedagogical Development Unit, serving as an intranet for all educational and management staff.
- Implementation of online system-wide professional communities (MS Team), acting also as a replacement for the Learning Gateway.
- Implementation of a shared calendar on the Pedagogical Development SharePoint, accessible to all educational staff for training and events.
- Cooperation with European SchoolNet (and Europeana).
- Digital Competence Framework. Finalisation of adaptation of DigComp to the European Schools and publication of teaching ideas on the PEDDA SharePoint.

- Cooperation with the experts' working group responsible for the technological tool accompanying the mathematics and science syllabuses.

D) Reports and statistical analysis

- Report on school failures and repeat rates in the European Schools – 2020 (2020-09-D-26-en-2)
- Statistical analysis of implementation of the New Marking System for Secondary 5 and 6 results (presented to the BoG in April 2020 and to the JTC in October 2020)

E) Advising ES and AES on regulatory and pedagogical matters

- Frequent queries from school management, teaching staff, parents, pupils and external partners on various matters, e.g.
 - Interpretation and application of regulations (General Rules, Organisation of Studies, Language Policy)
 - Questions regarding enrolment
 - School management's request for help in decision-making, such as in changes of courses, prerequisite for enrolment from other educational systems, permitted use of educational tools in examinations
 - Curriculum-related questions

A growing number of requests are being received from Accredited European Schools.

Achievement of the pedagogical objectives 2020

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| Priority 1 | Implementation of New Marking System |
| Cycle | Secondary Cycle |
| Main steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further communication to the Member States concerning establishing the equivalence tables; • Continuation of the implementation in years s1-s6 and prepare the implementation in s7; • In cooperation with the schools, observing the impact of the NMS on final marks and extend the analysis to year s6; • Publication of Bac sample papers with marking instructions. |
| Achievements | <p>Document 2019-11-D-23 'Update on the Introduction of the New Marking System' was presented at the meeting of the Board of Governors in December 2019 and at the subsequent meetings in April and August 2020. Updated document 2014-03-D-25-en-8 'Equivalences between the European Baccalaureate and the upper secondary leaving certificate of national schools and admission of European Baccalaureate-holders to Universities in the member countries' was published on the website. Sample Bac papers adopted for implementation of the New Marking System were published and distributed amongst the schools. The New Marking System was continuously implemented in s7 in the 2020-2021 school year.</p> |
| Result of performance indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison of s5 and s6 results of school years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 <p>The document '<i>Statistical analysis of the final marks in S5 in the 2018-2019 school year</i>' (2020-03-D-50-en-1) was presented to the Board of Governors in April 2020. Following this analysis, a presentation was produced for the JTC meeting in October 2020, focusing on the results of s6 pupils in the 2019-2020 school year. In these analyses the results of the same cohort of pupils (s5 in 2018-2019 and s6 in 2019-2020) were observed. This analysis revealed the changes from the old marking system to the new marking system. The drop in averages and the slightly changed distribution of grades are justified by the new scale, which has introduced a new threshold for the pass level and more positive grades.</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison of pass rates in years s1-s6 in school years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 <p>The statistical analysis reflected in 2020-03-D-50-en-1 and the '<i>Report on school failures and repeat rates</i>' (2020-09-D-26-en-1) indicated that the number and percentage of pupils who failed and repeated the year, had fallen further. On the one hand, this is in line with the ten-year trend towards a decline in repeat and failure rates and on the other, it is due to the fact that in the second semester, the schools introduced distance teaching and assessment, and the final results are comparable with previous years's results.</p> |
| Further necessary steps | <p>The New Marking System is implemented in the Baccalaureate (s7 in 2020-2021). Next steps will be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuation of the analysis of the final marks, the examination results and the fail rates. This analysis will have to take into account that the COVID-19 pandemic could have influenced the statistical results due to online teaching and cancelation of some of the exams; • updated information of the Member States and of the umbrella organisations of the national universities. |

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| Priority 2 | Implementation of the recommendations of the Educational Support Evaluation Report and the Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education |
| Cycle | Nursery, Primary and Secondary Cycles |
| Main steps | <p>Tackling all mid-term highly important and important actions proposed in the Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The qualifications required to be held by educational support teachers should be clearly defined; • Recruitment criteria for teaching staff, including EdSup qualifications and experience, are established; • Recommend a minimum ratio of time allocation for support coordination based on the number of pupils receiving Educational Support as guidance for schools; • Recommend the requirements for the qualifications and expertise of support coordinators; • Mandate the Educational Support Policy Working Group to examine in more detail the way in which the schools 'use' the Support Assistants and to review the job description; |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate the AAS Working Group to review Support Assistants' legal status in the light of the analysis carried out by the EduSup Policy Group; • Concrete needs for training in inclusive education are mapped, a training policy is developed and a dedicated budget is set up; • Ensure competences to provide reasonable accommodation for individual needs; • Personalised support: Ensure that the schools adapt their policy in accordance with children's needs, within the framework of the autonomy that they are granted; • Create a harmonised chapter dealing with educational support needs in all the enrolment forms of the different schools; • Collect/Develop/Make available comprehensive tools for early identification/pedagogical diagnostics harmonised across the system; • National Inspectors agree to act as the first point of contact with respect to transfers; • Schools share best practices with respect to transfers. |
| Achievements | <p>In the year 2020, the actions relating to Human Resources dealing with Educational Support were implemented. Specifically, the profile and qualifications of teaching staff involved in Educational Support were established, as were guidelines for their appointment. Similarly, the recommendations regarding</p> <p>a) Support Coordinators' qualifications and expertise and b) the minimum time allocation for Educational Support Coordination were approved.</p> <p>Additionally, Educational Support Assistants' legal status was reviewed. To sum up: the chapter of the Action Plan relating to Human Resources dealing with Educational Support was closed, except for the action relating to 'secretarial support', whose development depends on the IAS consultancy report's analysis and its follow-up by the Internal Control Capability Unit.</p> <p>The actions relating to 'early identification' of pupils' abilities and needs and 'training policy' are being developed or are under consultation, and are expected to be submitted to the relevant Boards for approval in 2021. Because of the schools' particular situation as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the actions relating to training policy were initiated but not further developed and finalised as other training needs arose and other actions relating to development of remote provision of Educational Support were prioritised.</p> <p>In 2020, the OSG developed the preparatory work for the setting up of a Service Level Agreement with the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education to carry out an External Evaluation of the Action Plan as from January 2021.</p> |

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| Result of performance indicators | 6.5 out of the 13 planned actions were implemented. 3.5 actions were partially implemented and are at the consultation stage. 3 actions have not yet been implemented. |
| Further necessary steps | Addressing and completing the remaining short, medium and long-term actions. |

D. Quality assurance in administration and finance

Achievement in the ongoing business

1. Budget of the Office of the Secretary-General

The final budget for the Office of the Secretary-General for 2020 was 13 807 809 EURO, of which 13 333 705 EURO were committed in 2020, representing a budget implementation level of 97%. Expenditure relating to seconded staff in 2020 was 11.3% higher than in 2019, mainly as a result of a number of posts being filled either at the end of 2019 or during the course of 2020, such as the Head of the ICT Unit and the Coordinator for Educational Support.

Expenditure relating to administrative and ancillary staff also rose in relation to 2019. The 17.3% increase can be accounted for by a number of new posts which were created and filled at the Office of the Secretary-General, mainly involving the Central Accounting Officer's unit, the Internal Control Unit and the Procurement sub-unit.

Overall, expenditure relating to staff in 2020 was 7.8 million EURO, which is 16.4 % higher than in the previous year. A salary increase of 2.0%, effective from 1 July 2019, was paid to both categories of staff in 2020.

As regards other administrative expenditure, it is worth drawing attention to the significant increases in building-related expenditure (20.7%) and in ICT expenditure (39.8%). As regards the former, the increases can be accounted for by the work that was undertaken on the third floor of the Pericles building in 2020 in order to accommodate additional staff. The increase in ICT relates to the investment in integration into the cloud environment (AZURE).

Budget item 'OSG' includes a number of components relating to activities which are carried out for the benefit of the European School system as a whole. The main components are translation of documents for the different committees and interpretation services, reimbursement of costs relating to meetings of the Board of Governors, Budgetary Committee and Boards of Inspectors, expenditure relating to the conduct of European Baccalaureate examinations and litigation costs, as well as costs of experts. Budget implementation in 2020 was significantly lower than in 2019, due mainly to the Covid-19 pandemic circumstances in which the European Schools operated. Indeed, many meetings took place remotely, thus bringing about significant savings in travel costs. The cost of the Baccalaureate is worth underlining, as most of the work relating to preparations and corrections was done by videoconference.

Miscellaneous administrative expenditure includes staff mission expenditure, office equipment and supplies, training of administrative and ancillary staff, telephone costs and expenses relating to internal meetings. Those costs also fell (23.2%), again due to the pandemic situation, with most missions and training courses having been cancelled.

Finally, pedagogical expenses include reimbursements relating to the pedagogical training courses which are organised by the inspectors and they also declined considerably, by no less than 53.6%, as a result of the pandemic.

Budget implementation of the OSG in 2019 and 2020

| | 2019 | 2020 | % var. |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Expenditure related to seconded staff | 1,031,215 | 1,147,677 | 11.3% |
| Expenditure related to administrative and ancillary staff | 5,688,605 | 6,671,943 | 17.3% |
| <i>Sub-total Staff-related expenditure</i> | 6,719,819 | 7,819,620 | 16.4% |
| Buildings | 1,107,651 | 1,337,048 | 20.7% |
| ICT | 1,550,653 | 2,167,730 | 39.8% |
| OSGES | 2,810,386 | 1,661,004 | -40.9% |
| Miscellaneous administrative expenditure | 410,567 | 315,513 | -23.2% |
| <i>Sub-total Other administrative expenditure</i> | 5,879,258 | 5,481,294 | -6.8% |
| Pedagogical expenditure | 70,657 | 32,791 | -53.6% |
| Total | 12,669,735 | 13,333,705 | 5.2% |

2. Human Resources

In reporting on the activities of the Human Resources Unit of the Office of the Secretary-General (OSG), it should be remembered that since 2013, the Human Resources Unit has been responsible not only for human resources management at the Office but also for a number of human resources matters related to the staff of the 13 European Schools.

a) Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

During the 2020 calendar year, the work of the Human Resources Unit was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members of staff had to switch, within a very short period of time, from working *in situ* to teleworking and were supported in this change thanks to close cooperation between the ICT and the HR Units. Ad hoc rules on teleworking, as well as some guiding principles on wellbeing in the context of the pandemic and enforced teleworking, were shared with staff members.

Although the switch from working *in situ* to teleworking went very smoothly, it cannot be denied that this had a certain impact.

As a consequence of the health situation, periodical evaluation of administrative staff at the OSG was partially suspended during the year 2020.

Moreover, evaluation procedures for seconded and locally recruited teaching staff in the schools, in which the Human Resources Unit is partially involved, were also suspended or cancelled in the second semester of the 2019-2020 school year and the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year.

Finally, the organisation of selection procedures was impacted. Interviews with candidates were carried out via TEAMS. Interpretation, normally provided for interviews of seconded managerial staff in the schools and at the OSG, was suspended.

b) Recruitment procedures

As in previous years, in 2020 also, recruitment of new members of staff for the OSG and new members of the executive staff of the schools remained an important part of the work.

In this context it is worth mentioning that in 2020, the OSG joined the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) framework contract with LinkedIn, offering higher performance recruitment solutions, such as a Recruiter Career Page and job posting services.

The number of posts for seconded staff at the OSG increased by one in 2020 compared with the year 2019. The recruitment procedure for the newly created post of Educational Support Coordinator was successfully finalised and the new colleague started her secondment on 1 March 2020.

Moreover, it proved possible to fill two managerial functions that had remained vacant for several months, one was the post of Head of the ICT and Statistics Unit, which had been held *ad interim* by the Deputy Secretary-General for 18 months, before a new seconded head of unit could take over the post as from the beginning of September 2020. The second managerial function was the newly created post of Head of the Internal Control Capability Unit (replacing the former post of Financial Controller). For that post, no candidatures for secondment were received. However, based on the new Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Managerial Staff, it proved possible for this post finally to be filled, as from 1 October 2020, by a locally recruited expert.

The number of members of the Administrative and Ancillary Staff (AAS) also increased, going up from 68 in early 2019 to 82 in late 2020 (including temporary staff).

A total of 10 members of the AAS were recruited in 2020.

The new remuneration system for AAS ('Single Spine'), which was approved by the Board of Governors in April 2019 and entered into force on 1 January 2020, allowed the OSG also to fill administrative positions which had remained vacant for a while. They included the post of head of the Procurement sub-unit and the post of an IT System Engineer.

Five out of the ten recruitments were temporary ones. The appointments were made in order to be able to cope with an increased workload and to replace staff on long-term sick leave.

Moreover, ten recruitment procedures for executive staff in the 13 Schools were carried out by the Human Resources Unit, breaking down into one Director, five Deputy Directors in the pedagogical area and four Deputy Directors for Finance and Administration.

In addition, the Human Resources Unit coordinated the process of creation of seconded teaching posts in the 13 schools for the 2020-2021 school year and also preparation of the 2021-2022 school year and supported the schools in the selection process for the newly created functions of Assistant Deputy Directors.

Finally, the professional experience of 121 newly seconded teachers and five newly locally recruited members of the managerial staff had to be determined.

c) Training

In 2020, the Office offered various training courses to the members of its staff. The specific training courses organised by the ICT Unit are not mentioned in this report.

Two staff members, one from the Accounts Unit and one from the Human Resources Unit, were offered the opportunity to attend a two-day training course on managing the payroll of AAS members. Two members of staff from the SAP sub-unit attended a training course for the SAP HR Hub. Two members of staff from the ICT Unit were trained for four days in PM² methodology and one seconded staff member from the OSG registered for a French course, for 60 hours, and at the Commission, thanks to the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the European Commission. Two members of the Human Resources Unit were trained in management of the 'EU Learn' platform for one day each.

Over the year, the creation of more than 350 accounts was processed by the Human Resources Unit to grant access for the whole system to the 'EU Learn' platform. The Human Resources Unit also dealt with the registration of teachers from the two Luxembourg Schools with the platform and for Language courses. The 'EU Learn' platform offers the opportunity to take short online training courses for free. In 2020, only two members of staff took the opportunity to take three of them.

This makes a total of 25 training days in 2020 for a total of 11 members of staff.

The development of a coherent human resources management policy and also a training policy at the OSG are tasks that remain to be dealt with in 2021.

d) Participation in Working Groups

The Human Resources Unit was also involved in the work of different Working Groups.

In 2020, the 'AAS' Working Group met three times and focused its work on implementation of the new salary and remuneration system for AAS ('Single Spine') and the legal status of Support Assistants. The recommendation to harmonise their legal status and to offer permanent contracts under certain conditions is addressed in the 'Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education' and was approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting in December 2020. In 2021, the AAS Working Group is supposed to evaluate implementation of the 'Single Spine' and the new Evaluation and Progression system for AAS and to provide the Board of Governors with potential proposals to improve both.

The 'Locally Recruited Teachers' Working Group met twice in 2020, in order to address legal questions associated with application of the Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers in the European Schools. The main objective was to ensure harmonised application of the Service Regulations in all 13 schools.

The 'Seconded Staff Working Group' met only once in 2020. At that meeting, the Working Group finalised its discussion on rationalisation of calculation of the salaries of seconded staff members. The Working Group's proposal was approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting in April 2020 and entered into force on 1 September 2020.

A 'Joint Working Group', bringing together representatives of the seconded staff and locally recruited teachers, met twice in 2020 in order to discuss initial proposals for 'Guidelines for Effective Combating of Harassment in the European Schools (Anti-Bullying Policy)'. The Group's work was suspended during the second half of the calendar year and will be continued in 2021 in order to finalise the proposal. Moreover, the 'Joint Working Group' will be consulted with respect to evaluation of the 'Attractiveness Package' for teaching staff, which was approved by the Board of Governors in April 2019 and entered into force on 1 September 2019.

The 'Deputy Directors for Finance and Administration' Working Group met four times in early 2020 in order to finalise its proposal for new 'Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Managerial Staff of the European Schools'. The proposal was approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting in April 2020 and the new Service Regulations entered into force on 1 May 2020. Again in 2020, four Deputy Directors for Finance and Administration and one Head of Unit at the Office of the Secretary-General were recruited and appointed under this new legal framework. Moreover, three out of four previously locally recruited Deputy Directors for Finance and Administration changed their legal status and are now covered by the new Service Regulations.

The 'Brexit' Working Group met twice in 2020. In the 'Sixth Report of the Brexit Working Group', presented to the Board of Governors in April 2020, it addressed possibilities of future cooperation with the UK after expiry of the transitional phase at the end of August 2021 and ways to compensate for the loss of the UK inspectors and their expertise. The 'Seventh Report of the Brexit Working Group', presented to the Board of Governors in December 2020, again focused on proposals as to how to deal with the loss of the UK inspectors and the question of their replacement. In the end, the Board of Governors approved a proposal to create, as from February 2021, a post of temporary expert at the Office of the Secretary-General to support in particular the Irish and Maltese national Inspectors in their tasks associated with the English language.

Finally, the HR Unit supported the Covid-19 related 'Task Force Preparation of the 2020/21 school year' in the area of human resources management and inspector activities. Proposals associated with evaluation of Directors and Deputy Directors, seconded teaching staff and locally recruited teachers in the 2020-2021 school year were approved by the Board of Governors at its extraordinary meeting in October 2020.

e) Sickness Fund

The Sickness Fund Management Committee met twice in 2020 in order to discuss particular questions relating to the Sickness Fund regime. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic context, potential statutory regulations were mooted and possible temporary derogations were discussed.

A Service Legal Agreement (SLA) between the Central Office and the European Commission is still in the process of preparation and according to the latest update, it should be signed in the first quarter of 2021. As a reminder, this SLA will include the legal basis for the cooperation and services provided by the EC within the framework of the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme for seconded staff in the European School system.

One of the successful projects implemented during this difficult time in 2020 was a training session, organised remotely on 21 October 2020, for newly seconded teachers of the European Schools. Around 100 teachers, Focal Points (contact persons appointed by each ES for JSIS issues) and also some Directors participated. The training session was given by representatives of the European Commission (PMO) and was highly rated by all participants.

f) Other HR Activities

In 2020, a new contract was signed with Partena, the current social secretariat of the OSG and of the European Schools, Brussels I and Brussels IV. The purpose was to use a new platform, which will allow improved payroll and post-payroll services to be provided with respect to the salaries of locally recruited staff at the OSG and the two schools concerned.

In total, ten meetings were organised via TEAMS to train the staff in charge of calculating salaries at the three entities.

During the year 2020, wellbeing at work was a priority for the OSG. The Human Resources Unit introduced a 'Welcome Brochure' for newcomers. Several projects were developed in close collaboration with the External Prevention Adviser, such as Guidelines for Return to work after long-term sick leave and Psychosocial Risks' Prevention at work.

By the end of the year 2020 an internal ad hoc working group had finalised its work on a permanent teleworking policy, which entered into force in December 2020.

g) Building management

Since 2019, the Human Resources Unit has also been in charge of building management.

The assistant in charge was partially occupied by the removal of certain units to the third floor of the office building. He focused on the following objectives in particular:

- Coordination of and follow-up on adaptation work and division of the third floor open area into several offices, and the subsequent relocation of the units concerned;
- Adaptation of the OSG premises to the Covid-19 situation, with additional facilities and on-site publication of safety measures;
- Implementation of and follow-up on air conditioning adaptation work (hot/cold) in the offices on the second and third floors (the latter due to be completed by January 2021) to improve employees' wellbeing;
- In cooperation with the Procurement sub-unit for contract issues, and the accounting sub-unit for budgetary commitments, conclusion of the following contracts:
 - o Four years' maintenance of automatic access doors (DORMAKABA);
 - o Four-year contract for the access control system (ES CONCEPT);
 - o Four-year contract for maintenance of the HVAC system, the electricity generator and a related fuel tank and pump, the UPS batteries and the fire detection, protection and alarm system (DISTECABLE);
 - o Installation of a 7/7 24/24 building surveillance system for the server room's peripheral installations (referred to in the previous point) and a four-year contract for maintenance of the surveillance system (TOUT INSTALL);
 - o Four-year contract with an external consultant (FILMCO) for technical advice;
 - o Draft of a 'passage agreement' through the OSG -1 floor between the OSG, KBC and CENELEC (located on -1 floor), for security reasons.

3. Central Enrolment Authority for the Brussels European Schools (CEA)

The CEA's task is to deal with enrolment and transfer applications in accordance with the provisions of the Policy on Enrolment in the Brussels European Schools, devised on the basis of guidelines adopted each year by the Board of Governors.

1. Objectives and priorities for enrolments for the year 2020-2021

At the meeting of the Board of Governors of 3 to 5 December 2019, it was noted that the increase in the pupil population had reached a higher level than in the previous years (472 pupils for the 2019-2020 school year, whereas the figures had been 276 and 382 in the previous two years), and that the schools found themselves in an overcrowding situation such that capacity to admit new pupils was very close to the limit in terms of classrooms.

Consequently, the objective of the 2020-2021 enrolment session was to enrol all category I pupils who so wished in one of the Brussels European Schools, whilst also taking care to ensure that pupils were distributed across both the sites and the language sections, by using the places still available at the Brussels I – Berkendael Site School in the nursery and primary cycles (which had 730 pupils on roll in 2019, with a theoretical capacity of 1000 pupils) and at the Brussels IV School in the secondary cycle (which, although it had reached its overall capacity limit, still had classrooms in the secondary cycle).

On the basis of a maximum structure of classes defined by school, new pupils were enrolled up to a maximum of 20 places available per class in the nursery and primary cycles and of 26 in the secondary cycle, in order to be conducive to distribution of the pupil population across the schools/sites.

For the third time, the parents of pupils in P5 of the FR language section on the Berkendael site, which is equipped solely to accommodate nursery and primary cycle pupils, were obliged to submit applications for a transfer to the Brussels I – Uccle Site, Brussels II, III and IV European Schools, so that their children could continue their schooling in the secondary cycle at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year in September 2020. Such applications were dealt with as a matter of priority according to the order of preference of schools expressed. In addition, this year, 2 pupils in P5 LV who were attending school on this site had to be admitted as SWALS to the Brussels II School.

As regards the calendar for the enrolment session in two phases, introduced in 2018-2019, this form of organisation was maintained. Thus, applicants for enrolment who were in post in the European Institutions (or engaging in a professional activity conferring entitlement for their children to be regarded as pupils coming under category I and children of members of the staff of Eurocontrol – as from primary year 1) on 31 December 2019 had to submit their application during the first phase. The second phase was intended for applicants for enrolment taking up their posts in Brussels with effect from 1 January 2020. However, applicants in post on 31 December 2019 were allowed to submit their application during the second phase where they were able to establish that a case of *force majeure* was concerned or if their children had been being educated outside Belgium in 2019-2020.

The CEA awarded places in the order provided for by the Enrolment Policy, whilst also taking account of the order of preference of schools expressed in the case of applications for enrolment in multiple sections present in several schools/sites.

As regards voluntary transfer applications, allowed without having to justify particular circumstances, provided that this did not lead to division of a class, they were accepted:

- at the Brussels I – Berkendael Site School in the classes, language sections and year groups open there,
- at the Brussels IV School in the case of Estonian SWALS attending the Brussels II School and in the context of the bringing together of siblings, as defined by the Enrolment Policy.

2. Results of the 2020-2021 Enrolment Policy

The main data on the 2020-2021 enrolment session are as follows:

- 2 877 enrolment and transfer applications were received and dealt with, 2 836 of them being for categories I or II.
- 14 applications for the enrolment of category III children were received. Only one of those pupils fulfilled the first condition, namely being the sibling of a pupil or pupils already attending a school, but it was not possible for the pupil in question to be admitted in accordance with the rules for admission of such pupils in numbers terms.
- Of the 22 applications for the enrolment of children of NATO civilian staff, 15 pupils were admitted to the schools.
- Of the 5 applications for the enrolment of children of UN international civil servants, 4 pupils were admitted to the schools.
- **In total, 1 978 new pupils were accepted in the Brussels Schools at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year in September 2020, breaking down as follows:**

| Brussels I – Uccle Site | Brussels I – Berkendael Site | Brussels II | Brussels III | Brussels IV | TOTAL |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 427 | 263 | 423 | 407 | 458 | 1 978 |

Of the 2 749 places offered, 1 054 involved pupils applying for enrolment in a single language section or with a special priority criterion.

Furthermore, of those 2 749 places offered, only 2 239 were initially accepted, meaning that 19% of enrolment applications (i.e. 510) were refused on receipt of the CEA's decision. The majority of the 510 places refused had been awarded at the Brussels I – Berkendael Site and Brussels IV Schools.

Of the 2 239 places initially accepted, 261 offers were subsequently cancelled by the parents, 154 of them corresponding to an offer in the first preference school.

In total, 771 enrolment applications were dealt with without giving rise to new enrolments, a figure representing almost a third of the total number of places offered (28%), as compared with usually a quarter in previous years.

The 71 pupils who had been in P5 (FR and LV) at the European School, Brussels I – Berkendael Site in 2019-2020 and for whom a compulsory transfer application had been submitted were all accepted in their first preference school.

In so far as organisation of the enrolments calendar in two phases is now known to applicants, an increase in the number of applications submitted during the first phase was noted: 2 231 applications out of a total of 2 806 for the two phases combined, i.e. 80% of applications submitted during the first phase. For information, of the 575 applications received during the second phase, 87 were submitted on the basis of a case of *force majeure*; 44 of those applications were deemed inadmissible.

At the beginning of the new school year in September 2020, the situation of each school/site was as follows:

- At the **Brussels I – Uccle Site** School, total pupil numbers increased, this resulting solely from the increase in the secondary cycle.
- The **Brussels I – Berkendael Site** School is seeing its numbers move closer to its capacity of 1 000 pupils, with 880 pupils. In addition to the French, Latvian and Slovakian language sections in the nursery and primary cycles, satellite classes are open for the following Languages 1: up to P5 for German, up to P2 for Greek, English and Italian and in the nursery cycle and P1 for Spanish.
- At the **Brussels II** School, pupil numbers rose again.
- At the **Brussels III** School, which is the most overcrowded one, a further 105 pupils were added to the roll.
- The **Brussels IV** School is also overcrowded, with a substantial increase in pupil numbers in the secondary cycle.

3. Enrolment Policy for 2020-2021

The growth in the population of the Brussels European Schools at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year in September 2020 (480 additional pupils) was, for the second consecutive school year, higher than the average of approximately 400 pupils recorded in previous years.

The overcrowding of the Brussels I – Uccle Site, Brussels II and III Schools has become even more marked, despite the steps taken to curtail it, and the Brussels IV School is also now overcrowded, accommodating almost 200 pupils more than its capacity.

Pending the opening of a fifth School, a new temporary site in Evere, designed for the nursery and primary cycles, will be made available by Belgium with effect from September 2021. In accordance with the decision of the Board of Governors of 20 October 2020, this Evere site is attached to the European School, Brussels II and classes of all the language sections open in that school can be created on the new site, provided that a sufficient number of pupils can be assembled (without prejudice to the grouping of several year groups rule) and that harmonious distribution of pupil numbers between the Evere and Woluwé sites is ensured.

In order to make maximum use of the resources of the new temporary site and to relieve the overcrowding of the other schools/site, the Enrolment Policy for 2021-2022 provides that all non-priority enrolment applications for the 2021-2022 school year that can be accepted on the Evere site will be referred there, provided that the language section and year group are open there, as will applications giving that site as their first preference. In addition, transfers from the other schools/sites to this new site will be allowed.

As regards the Berkendael site, the Board of Governors also decided, at its meeting of 20 October 2020, to consolidate its integration into the Brussels I School, on the model of the decision concerning the new organisation of the Brussels II School.

In that context, for pupils on roll in P5 at the Brussels I – Berkendael Site School during the 2020-2021 school year, their move up to secondary year 1 can proceed as follows:

- either continue their schooling at the Brussels I – Uccle Site School⁴,
- or, for those who so wish, submit an application for a required transfer to the Brussels II – Woluwé Site, Brussels III or Brussels IV Schools. This application and, where applicable, that for their siblings, will be considered taking account of the order of preference of schools expressed by the applicants, within the limit of the places to be filled, unless a special priority criterion, as defined by the Enrolment Policy, is claimed.

⁴ For the FR language section and the DE satellite class. Pupils on roll in the LV section will continue their schooling at EEB2 – WOL Site, where they will take on the status of SWALS. Pupils on roll in the SK section will continue their schooling at EEB3, where they will take on the status of SWALS.

The arrangements for organisation of the calendar for the submission of applications are continuing, taking account of situations frequently observed during recent enrolment sessions. Enrolment and transfer applications for category I and Eurocontrol (as from primary year 1) pupils, one of whose parents was in post on 31 December 2020, must be submitted during the first phase. The second enrolment phase is open solely to applicants taking up their posts as from 1 January 2021, except where they can establish a case of *force majeure* on the basis of documentary evidence or where the pupils concerned are being educated outside Belgium during the 2020-2021 school year.

The 2021-2022 Enrolment Policy can be consulted on the website of the Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools www.eursec.eu under *Enrolments/Policy on Enrolment in the Brussels European Schools*.

4. Legal Aspects

Appeals

In 2020, **214 administrative appeals** were dealt with by the Office of the Secretary-General, which also monitored and followed up on 99 contentious appeals. These figures are up markedly on the previous year, when only 67 administrative appeals were recorded, and contrast sharply with the reduction observed in recent years.

The most spectacular increase is to be observed at the level of Baccalaureate disputes, since no fewer than 136 administrative appeals were lodged in 2020, as against only 14 in 2019. This fact is attributable to the adjustments that had to be made to the 2020 Baccalaureate session examinations on account of the coronavirus pandemic.

Last year was also marked by an upsurge in appeals concerning the amount of school fees for category III pupils, several families having sought a refund or a reduction in the amount to be paid because of the suspension of *in situ* lessons, justified by the health crisis. Similarly, two appeals were lodged against decisions taken by the Board of Governors in that context.

Finally, the emergence of a new type of dispute is to be observed, namely the contesting of decisions against refusals of a change of Language 2 during schooling, since 5 such appeals were lodged in that area, 4 of which were allowed, the conditions for such a change being far less restrictive than those governing requests for a change of Language 1.

Details of all administrative and contentious appeals, by area or decision-making organ, are given below:

| Administrative appeals | Contentious appeals |
|--|--|
| | <p>32 appeals against decisions of the Central Enrolment Authority (including 3 in summary proceedings)</p> <p>1 allowed – 30 dismissed – 1 case in which judgment is pending</p> |
| <p>24 appeals against a Class Council's decision</p> <p>9 allowed – 15 dismissed</p> | <p>5 appeals against a Class Council's decision (including 1 in summary proceedings)</p> <p>5 dismissed</p> |
| <p>6 appeals concerning an application for enrolment in schools other than the Brussels ones</p> <p>3 allowed – 3 dismissed</p> | <p>0 appeals concerning an application for enrolment in schools other than the Brussels ones</p> |
| <p>10 appeals concerning determination of Language 1</p> <p>10 dismissed</p> | <p>0 appeals concerning determination of Language 1</p> |

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| 5 appeals concerning choice of Languge 2 4 allowed – 1 dismissed | 0 appeals concerning choice of Languge 2 |
| 21 appeals concerning the teaching staff, including 3 lodged by locally recruited teachers 3 allowed - 18 dismissed | 5 appeals concerning the teaching staff, including 3 lodged by locally recruited teachers (2 concerning the substance + 1 seeking rectification) 1 allowed – 4 dismissed |
| 136 administrative appeals against the European Baccalaureate results (133 + 3 in the Pre-Bac) 4 allowed (including 3 Pre-Bac) - 132 dismissed | 54 appeals against the European Baccalaureate results (including 23 in summary proceedings) 54 dismissed |
| 0 appeals concerning special needs pupils | 0 appeals concerning special needs pupils |
| 3 appeals against a temporary exclusion or an expulsion decision 1 allowed – 2 dismissed | 1 appeal against a temporary exclusion or an expulsion decision 1 allowed |
| 5 appeals concerning the payment of school fees 5 dismissed | 2 appeals concerning the payment of school fees 2 dismissed |
| 2 appeals against a decision of the Board of Governors 2 dismissed | 0 appeals against a decision of the Board of Governors |
| 2 appeals not coming into any of the aforementioned categories 2 dismissed | 0 appeals not coming into any of the aforementioned categories |
| TOTAL: 214 | TOTAL⁵: 99 (including 27 in summary proceedings) |

⁵ This number may not correspond exactly to the one given by the Complaints Board in its annual report because of a time lag from year to year. For the year 2020, however, the figures correspond.

Current status and future prospects

The Covid-19 pandemic that has been rampant throughout the world since December 2019, forcing States to adopt lockdown measures, had a major impact on activities in the year 2020 and required urgent measures to be adopted by and in the Schools, to ensure continuity of service, whilst also following the locally imposed health instructions.

Whilst initially, the measures adopted (closure of schools, distance teaching, teleworking, health precautions, etc.) did not change the legal order, so that they could be taken without the Board of Governors' intervention, it fairly quickly became necessary to amend the existing texts implementing the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools in order to respond to the health crisis and its repercussions.

In particular, substantial amendments were made to the Arrangements for Implementing the Regulations for the European Baccalaureate and the General Rules, the latter to ensure sufficient certainty for the organisation of online lessons, whilst also guaranteeing protection of the privacy and of the personal data of pupils and their teachers.

The year 2020 having been atypical in more than one respect, the Office received unusual requests and complaints, concerning, for example, the physical and psychosocial constraints brought about by teleworking or distance teaching, but also relating to the payment of school fees, some parents requesting a reduction in the amount or a refund, because of financial difficulties (associated with the pandemic) or on account of the suspension of *in situ* lessons.

From the legal viewpoint, it also proved necessary to adapt the internal management procedures to allow compliance with them remotely, whilst the Office had to deal with a large number of questions and disputes concerning the cancellation of school trips and the possibility of obtaining refunds of costs incurred in advance by the School or the parents.

Finally, in human resources terms, a most gratifying development was the arrival at the Office of a new Legal Assistant, assigned partly (50%) to the Human Resources Unit and partly (the other 50%) to support the Legal Assistant to the Secretary-General in the performance of her duties. The range of grounds for dispute and challenges of a legal nature having increased and widened considerably in 2020, an additional member of staff to help to tackle their follow-up and resolution is most welcome.

Achievement of 2020 objectives

1. Accredited European Schools

| Specific objective 1 | AES: Improve quality of audit processes |
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| Main steps | <p><u>Initial accreditation process:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the use of the templates for presenting General Interest Files and Dossiers of Conformity <p><u>Audit process:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-signing all the existing accreditation and additional accreditation agreements in line with the new regulations • Training inspectors, AES directors and ‘experts’ to use the new audit toolkit • Using the new audit toolkit in the audits scheduled for Autumn 2020 <p><u>Both:</u> Setting up a Steering Committee to monitor and analyse the new accreditation and audit processes</p> |
| Achievements | <p><u>Initial accreditation process:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All General Interest Files (2) and Conformity Files (2) were submitted in accordance with the templates. <p><u>Audit process:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All accreditation and additional accreditation agreements were re-signed in line with the new regulations • Everyone was trained to use the new toolkit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inspectors were trained on 10th February 2020 (pm) ○ Experts were trained on 23rd June 2020 (pm) and 7th July 2020 (am) ○ Directors trained on 25th August 2020 (am) • The new toolkit was used for all 11 audits in Autumn 2020, even though 10 of the audits were carried out at a distance due to the pandemic. Feedback has been collected from both Inspectors and Experts involved in the renewed audit process and will be used as a basis for the exchange at the AES Steering Committee meeting planned for January 2021. |

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| | <p><u>Both:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Steering Committee was formed and met in June and July 2020 to discuss the audit challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. • The Steering Committee will meet in January 2021 to monitor and analyse the first round of usage of the new accreditation and audit processes. |
| Further necessary steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspector training will need to be a continuous process as new inspectors join the system. • The composition of the team of experts will need to be evaluated and the need for new experts will need to be evaluated. In this case, training of new experts will need to be organised. • Feedback on the renewed audit process from the delegations that have an AES on their territory needs to be collected. • After the second round of use of the new audit toolkit, an evaluation of all the changes introduced will need to be organised. <p>Request all schools to re-submit their conformity files in accordance with the new template (annexes II and III of 2019-12-D-12-en-1)</p> |

2. Administration and finance 2020

- **Continued implementation of 2019 objectives**

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| Specific objective 1 | Lead the implementation of the new Financial Governance structure |
| Main steps | Finalisation of the centralisation of payments in the online banking system (Accounting Officer of the ES, OSG Project Manager Central Governance), target date June 2020. <u>Open from 2019:</u> Taking over of the approval of payments in the online banking software (2nd signature) in remaining schools (Frankfurt and Munich) |
| Achievements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since June 2020 the payments of all Schools have been centralised (2nd signature given by the Central Accounting Officer or his Team). |
| Result of performance indicators | n/a |
| Further necessary steps | None |

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| Specific objective 2 | Implementation of outstanding IAS recommendations: - Outgoing payments |
| Main steps | Ensure the automatic clearing of payments (OSG Head of Accounting, SAP team OSG), target date: June 2020. <u>Open from 2019:</u> Automatic clearing not yet possible in all schools. The usage of ISABEL as online banking system is expected to allow automatic clearing in all schools, once technical issues encountered, related to format for inter-banks communications, are addressed. |

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| Achievements | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Since all Schools use the ISABEL online banking system, automatic clearing of bank statements is available to all Schools. The SAP Team prepared a procedure how to clear bank statements automatically. |
| Result of performance indicators | n/a. |
| Further necessary steps | None |

| Specific objective 3 | Develop a training policy for AAS of the OSG |
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| Main steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft a training policy for AAS in the Schools and at the OSG; • Produce a calendar so as to have training course needs from the HoU/Schools by the end of September, in order to prepare and schedule the training calendar and budget; • Revise the way in which training needs are assembled; • Define terms of priority according to budget; • Explore possible training providers; • Produce a training catalogue for the OSG. |
| Achievements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A training policy for AAS in the Schools and at the OSG has been drafted and now needs to be reviewed and validated. • The work to produce a training catalogue for the OSG has been started but needs to be finalised. • The legal requirements regarding specific topics such as Security were reviewed in order to identify training providers compliant with Belgian law. |
| Further necessary steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a calendar so as to have training course needs from the HoU/Schools by the end of September, in order to prepare and schedule the training calendar and budget. • Revise the way in which training needs are assembled. • Define terms of priority according to budget. • Explore possible training providers. • Finalise the training policy for AAS in the schools and at the OSG. • Finalise a training catalogue for the OSG. |

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| Specific objective 4 | Security: Implement outstanding IAS recommendations related to security: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk register for safety and security |
| Main steps | Support and guide the Schools in the development of a generic risk register for security risks |
| Achievements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A generic risk register for Safety and Security risks was developed Two meetings took place to discuss with the Schools (with DDFAs on 23rd November 2020, Safety and Security Officers on 15th December 2020) Agreement was reached that the register would be compiled for the AB meetings in January and February 2021. |
| Further necessary steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect compiled registers and close related IAS recommendation. |

- Common objectives 2020**

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| Specific objective 1 | Agree, issue and start implementing the memorandum on the management of extra-budgetary accounts (timeline > 1 year) |
| Main steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a memo on the management of extra-budgetary activities (ICC), target date 31 March 2020; Discussion and exchange with Schools (SG, ICC, HoU Accounts, Accounting Officer of the ES), target date: 30 June 2020; Issuing of memorandum (SG, ICC), target date: 30 June 2020. |
| Achievements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A memorandum was prepared in close cooperation with two Schools and regular exchange with all Directors; A memorandum was issued in July 2020 and the first steps of implementation entered into force as from September 2020. |
| Further necessary steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure necessary clarifications required so that school trips become part of the 2022 budget; Call for tendered by the OSG for school trips. |

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| Specific objective 2 | Agree, issue and start implementing the memorandum on the application of security procedures (timeline > 1 year): Camera surveillance, access policy, delivery policy and lockdown procedure |
| Main steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, agree and issue the procedures comprising the memorandum on the application of security procedures (SG, Executive Coordinator, Central Safety and Security Officer, Data Protection Officer), target date: 30 June 2020; • Define timeline for implementation (SG, Executive Coordinator, Central Safety and Security Officer), target date: after finalisation of procedures and consultation with schools. |
| Achievements | <p>The draft documents regarding the four core areas (the access procedure, the delivery procedure, the agreement and procedure regarding the use of cameras and the lockdown procedure) was developed and delivered to the schools for discussion. The feedback from the Directors of the schools in Brussels recommended major changes in the documents, aiming for a comprehensive and simpler, more transparent and more user-friendly version. Due to the lack of a Safety and Security Officer at the OSG, this process was slowed down and the new version has not yet been completed or implemented.</p> |
| Further necessary steps | <p>The new document mentioned in the previous paragraph is to be developed and delivered to the schools for 1) further discussion and 2) implementation after the necessary amendments. Revision and discussion on the documents is to take place during the first half of 2021. In some cases more detailed data are needed and a tailored approach for each school should be followed. In these cases revision and discussion may take longer. The implementation of measures that do not require interventions by the Belgian Building Agency (<i>Régie des Bâtiments</i>) can be carried out by the end of 2021, the others are subject to the planning of works by the Building Agency, which will be negotiated with their representatives.</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Specific objective 3 | General Data Protection: Compliance with GDPR - Implement data protection regulations (General Data Protection Regulation 2018, GDPR) |
| Main steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Schools in implementation of the Data Protection Regulation (Data Breach Policy, Procedure for using a Digital Learning Resource, Review of the MEMO for the implementation of data protection and the DPO's role), target date: 31.12.2020; • Organisation of a DPO Network meeting twice a year, target date: 31.12.2020; • Define and implement a procedure for the handling of pupil's medical data with the Health Data Working Group, target date: 31.12.2020; • Update of the Enrolment Form for the Brussels Schools as regards the sharing of pupils' data with the Parents' Association, target date: 31.12.2020; Drafting of a Privacy Statement for enrolment in the Brussels Schools, target date: 31.12.2020. |
| Achievements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEMO 2019-12-M-2-en-1/GM on 'Data Protection and the DPO's role in the European Schools'. • Document 2020-01-D-9-en-1 'Procedure to approve the use of a Digital Learning Resource within the European Schools' (annex to MEMO 2019-12-M-3-en-1/GM on 'Data Protection and Digital Learning Resources' in the European Schools). • Document 2020-05-D-7-en-1 'European Schools' Data Breach Policy' (annex to MEMO 2020-05-M-3-en-1/GM on Data Protection – European Schools' Data Breach Policy). • DPO Network meetings were held in January, May and June 2020. • A Health Data Working Group meeting was held on January 2020. Due to the pandemic situation that started in March, the meeting scheduled for 24 March was cancelled. • Document 2019-11-D-35-en-1 'Privacy Statement for enrolment in the Brussels European Schools'. • Contract amendment MySchool/OSG to ensure data protection compliance. • Review of the Differential Adjustment new app in terms of data protection compliance. |
| Further necessary steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-launch completion of the Register of Processing Activities for the OSG and the Schools and update the Guide. • Re-launch the Health Data WG. • Set up bi-annual meetings with the DPO Network. • Restart training courses for the OSG's employees. • Draft standard clauses and Data Protection Agreement templates for the Procurement sub-unit. |

Financial Management and internal control

1. Set-up of the Financial Management System

SAP Accounting System

In 2020, the SAP accounting software and training manuals were further developed, notably:

- Review of documentation and training material on:
 - Budget management
 - Procurement management
- Reporting on customer aging balance
- Enhancement of the procurement flow (no RFQ encoded in SAP any longer)
- Go-live of profit centre accounting (December 2020) and automatic determination for SMS invoices
- New procedure for school trips reimbursement (mass reimbursement)
- Follow-up on SAP technical audit for the validation of the accounting system (art. 35.2 Financial Regulation)

Segregation of duties (SOD)

The memorandum issued by the Secretary-General in 2018 was applied. All changes to the segregation of duties table were communicated to the Internal Control Capability Unit, which approved them prior to putting the changes into production in SAP.

The SoD sheet was fully compliant with segregation of duties.

A financial initiator from the Brussels II School was assigned to work for the OSG temporarily on a part-time basis, for the period from 15 October 2020 to 15 April 2021, in view of the lack of staff in the OSG accounting team.

Payments and online banking system

The SAP system is linked to the ISABEL online banking system. All payments are initiated in SAP and automatically sent to the online banking system, where two employees authorised to sign release them (signature 1: OSG Accounting Officer Correspondent/back-up of the OSG's Accounting Officer Correspondent, signature 2: the Central Accounting Officer or his team)

In 2020, all payments were signed with two signatures in the online banking software. The OSG registered three exceptions in the register of exceptions relating to payments for the year 2020: one related to a payment to a supplier located outside the EU (Swiss); another related to an urgent payment

in advance for the purchase of protective masks due to Covid-19; the final one related to a payment for a removal without the Financial Identification Sheet.

Simplified model

The SAP system offers the possibility of delegation from the Authorising Officer to the Verifier (simplified model of segregation of duties). The workflow ends with verification of the verification (four-eyes instead of the usual six-eyes principle). The prerequisite for use of the simplified model is a risk assessment and an act of delegation.

The OSG did not set up a simplified model for the year 2020.

Delegation of the Authorising Officer by delegation and by sub-delegation (Article 30.1 and 30.2 FR 2020)

The Secretary-General of the European Schools delegated his powers as Authorising Officer for implementation of the budget to the Deputy-Secretary General.

The Deputy-Secretary General further delegated his powers as Authorising Officer by delegation to the Head of the Human Resources Unit and the Executive Coordinator. They were authorising officers by sub-delegation for the following types of transaction:

- Authorisation of commitments of expenditure (up to an unlimited amount),
- Conclusion of legal commitments (up to an unlimited amount),
- Validation and authorisation of expenditure (up to an unlimited amount),
- Establishment of sales orders and recovery orders (up to an unlimited amount),
- Authorisation of the deletion of assets,
- Authorisation of employee master data in SAP.

The delegations remain valid until they are expressly amended or revoked, or until the delegate ceases to perform his/her duties.

2. Summary conclusion of the assessment of implementation of the internal control system

The assessment of the Internal Control Standards revealed that standards have been implemented and are operating to a large extent (6/16 green, 9/16 yellow and 1/16 red) but the following weaknesses have been identified:

- Continuity of operations: no emergency plan in existence, no business continuity plan to develop recovery strategies.

3. Register of exceptions

The OSG's register of exceptions for 2020 contains 12 exceptions related to non-compliance with rules, regulations and procedures.

They concerned the following:

- nine exceptions were linked to procurements. In these cases, three involved the extension of contracts without proper procurement procedures;
- two cases involved an overrun of the agreed amount. Another four cases related to non-compliance with procurement procedures (translation of report for the Bac, renting of a cooling system, maintenance of servers and an urgent service for deactivation of a gas fire protection system);
- three exceptions were connected to payments. They concerned a payment outside the EU (to Switzerland), a payment in advance for the purchase of protective masks due to Covid-19 and a payment of removal expenses without the respective Financial Identification Sheet.

4. Risk management

The European Schools top risks and their development during 2020 are shown in the following table:

| European Schools' system risks | Assessment Feb 2020 | Assessment Oct 2020 | Explanation |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| Unfilled seconded positions (for teachers and management positions) | 16 | 16 | Risk assessment remains the same, although the attractiveness package was approved by the BoG. The Covid-19 pandemic is making it difficult for the member states to find candidates who would like to move to another country. |
| Difficulties in recruiting and retaining highly qualified and specialised AAS | 12 | 6 | Reform of the AAS salary grid allows longer careers and better starting salaries. |
| Fifth School in Brussels expected for 2019 will not be available before 2026 | 20 | 20 | Temporary site promised for September 2021, tight calendar, permanent site not before 2028, temporary site will be full by then. |
| Implementation of cost neutrality of Accredited European Schools (AES) is yet to be seen | 4 | | Risk was taken out of the risk register as with the cost neutrality agreement, it seems to be under control. |

| | | | |
|--|----|----|---|
| Accreditation process of Accredited European Schools (AES) not yet implemented | 9 | 12 | Number of Accredited ES is constantly growing. It is becoming difficult for inspectors and experts to cope with the associated workload. |
| Lack of proper implementation of the new marking system | 8 | 8 | Implementation is continuing but the Covid-19 pandemic is making the work and necessary exchange between teachers and schools more difficult. |
| Proper recognition of the new marking system in the member states | 15 | 15 | Conversion tables of 10 countries were still missing at the end of 2020. |

The OSG updates the risks in February and October.

Results of external and internal audits

1. Audits by the Internal Audit Service (IAS)

In 2020, the IAS has performed the audit on controls over the European Baccalaureate. Within the framework of this audit, two schools have been visited, the European school of Brussels I and the Accredited European School of Rhein Main. The fieldwork was performed remotely in November due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the report is expected during 1st quarter 2021.

After verification of the implementation, the IAS has closed the following recommendations during the year 2020:

- Instructions for interpreting national salary slips of seconded nationals – important
- Controls over expenses cycle – very important

In October and November 2020, five recommendations were marked as ‘ready for review’:

- Memorandum on the management of extra-budgetary accounts – very important
- New format for the financial statements prepared under SAP – very important
- Working group “Review of the Financial Regulation – very important
- Knowledge management and monitoring – important
- Blocking of accounting transactions – important

With this, 10 recommendations remain open at the beginning of 2021. These have been taken into account in our plans for the year.

2. Audit by the Court of Auditors (ECA)

In 2020, the ECA performed a review of the accounts and internal control systems (recruitments, procurement, payments) in the ES of Brussels 1 and 2 as well as the OSG's. The court also performed a review of the consolidated accounts of the European Schools 2019 and did not identify any material errors in the final consolidated financial statements for 2019, except for the remaining uncertainty related to the liability of the ES of Munich covering the salaries of seconded teachers.

The ECA highlighted weaknesses in:

- Accruals accounting
- Payment procedures
- Procurement procedures
- Recruitment procedures.

Various actions are taken by the OSG and the Schools to tackle the identified weaknesses and implement recommendations:

- An accounting manual has been developed and issued for the use as of January 2021.
- The centralisation of payments is now fully in place with the configuration of signatories in the online banking software.
- A 'Payment Policy to Suppliers' has been put in place and will be further completed to improve payment processes.
- The meetings of the procurement networks have been taken up again in June 2020 and allow useful discussions with Schools.

DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE OF THE AUTHORISING OFFICER BY DELEGATION

ARTICLE 33 FR 2017

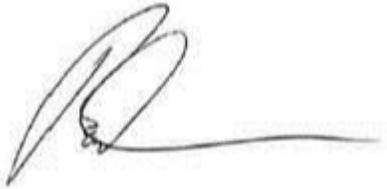
I, the undersigned, **Andreas BECKMANN**,
Deputy Secretary-General of the Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools,
in my capacity as **AUTHORISING OFFICER BY DELEGATION** in 2020,

- declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view¹;
- state that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guaranties concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

The reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment of the implementation of the internal control standards, results of ex-ante and a very limited amount of ex-post controls, the observations of the internal audit services and the lessons learnt from the Court of Auditors and other external auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration;

- confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interest of the Office of the Secretary-General

Brussels, 15th February 2021



(signature)



ANNEX – ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ICS

***Assessment of the implementation of the
Internal Control Standards per
31.12.2020***

Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools

Explanation:

The assessment of the Internal Control Standards is an important element of the preparation of the Annual Activity report and the included declaration of assurance. It helps you to decide whether you need to include a reservation in your declaration of assurance or not.

This template shall help you to perform the assessment of the implementation of the Internal Control Standards in your School/in the OSG. Each standard is assessed separately. Please proceed as follows:

- 1) Read the definition of the standard.*
- 2) Answer all questions (Operational Effectiveness Guidance) to reflect upon the different areas and aspects of each standard with yes or no (y/n).*
- 3) Describe how you have implemented the standard. Describe what you have done / what is in place. Link to any relevant documents (Description of implementation in School/OSG).*
- 4) Identify gaps and weaknesses. Describe what is missing / outstanding or not covered in current implementation (Identified gaps and weaknesses).*
- 5) Define the action you plan to take to close the gaps or address the weaknesses in 2020 (Action plan for 2021).*
- 6) Based on your answers, your gaps and weaknesses assess overall compliance with the standards: green = fully implemented, orange = partially implemented, red = not implemented. Colour the field at the top right underneath 'Assessment' in the respective colour.*
- 7) Prepare a summary conclusion. You will find proposals for summary conclusions at the end of this document, but you may also find your own wording.*
- 8) Add the summary conclusion in your AAR and attach this assessment as annex.*

For the decision whether a weakness requires a reservation in your declaration of assurance you need to assess the possible financial impact of your weaknesses.

*The European Schools have defined a threshold of < 1% of your budget. This means that if the possible financial impact of your weaknesses (accumulated) remains under 1% of your budget, you **do not need** to include a reservation. Nevertheless, you may point out that you have identified certain shortcomings and weaknesses.*

I. Mission and values

| | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 1. Mission | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
| The Secretary-General (SG)/Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) and each Director shall have an up-to-date mission statement, which is linked to the overall mission of the European Schools and made known to all staff. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard. | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Is the OSG/School's mission statement up-to-date and sufficiently comprehensive? | Y | A general short mission statement of the OSG of the European Schools is available on the website and in the multi-annual and annual plan of the OSG. | Principles and aims of the European Schools are stated but a comprehensive and up-to-date mission statement has not been established. | Discuss and establish a mission statement for the OSG for the next couple of years. |
| Does it answer the question: Why do we exist? How do we fit into the system of European Schools? | | See above | | |
| Are staff aware of the mission statement? | | See above | | |
| Relevant documents | | | | |
| Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools, Annual Pedagogical School Plan, Annual Administrative and Financial School Plan | | | | |

| 2. Ethical and organisational values | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|--|-----------------------------|--|---|--|
| Management and staff are aware of and share appropriate ethical and organisational values and uphold these through their own behaviour and decision-making. Management establishes appropriate guidelines covering the reporting of suspected improprieties and communicates these to all staff (whistle-blowing guidelines). | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Are staff sufficiently aware of the existing guidelines on ethic and integrity? | Y | Guidelines on Ethics and Integrity have been established in 2013. A well-being at work policy has been put in place as well as wellness and safety documents in teleworking | Staff members are not always aware of the guidelines. | A review of the guidelines. |
| Are they familiar with the staff regulations? | Y | Staff members receive relevant staff regulations and implementing rules at the beginning of their engagement. | | |
| Are the guidelines concise and comprehensive? | Y | | | |
| Are our values lived in day-to-day work? | | | | |
| Is all management and staff aware of what a conflict of interest is? | Y | Staff members are informed about risk of potential conflict of interests in the context of procurement and selection procedures | | |
| Are processes in place to facilitate the application of the guidelines (e.g. confidential channels to report alleged wrongdoings)? | N | A whistle blower policy is partly addressed in the guidelines on Ethics and Integrity. | The policy needs an update. | Review the guidelines. |

Relevant documents

- Guideline on Ethics and Integrity (2013-01-D-9-en-1)
- Regulations for Members of the Seconded Staff of the European schools (2011-04-D-14-en-5)
- Service Regulations for the Administrative and Ancillary Staff of the European Schools. Amendments approved by the board of governors of 2015. (2007-D-153-en-7)
- Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers in the European Schools (2016-05-D-11-en-1)
- Memorandum: Implementation of the Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers in the European Schools (2016-06-M-2-en)

II. Human Resources

| 3. <u>Staff recruitment and allocation</u> | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|--|---------------------|---|---|--|
| The SG/DSG and each Director recruit staff on the basis of planned and well-defined needs and allocate them according to their competences. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Are adequate procedures in place to ensure effective staff planning? | Y | A revised Memo (ref.: 2019-05-M-11-en-1), introducing required changes due to the GDPR has been put in place; Guidelines for the recruitment of temporary AAS (2020-07-D-21-en-1) have been issued and are applicable as of January 2021; A framework contract related to LinkedIn and Research Gate has been signed in 2020. | | Implementation of guidelines for the recruitment of temporary staff; Update of the memo 2019-05-M-11-en-1 in the light of these guidelines. |
| Is the documentation of the planned teaching capacity comprehensive (comparable to current year, projections of pupil's numbers, deviations) | N/A | | | |
| Do you strictly follow recruitment guidelines? | Y | Procedure scrupulously followed, especially as the annual audit of the European Court of Auditors focuses on this area. | CoA identified a lack of documentation of recruitment procedures for temporary staff and identified one selection procedure where the documentation of the pre-selection was not clear (CoA remark 2019 report) | Address identified weaknesses. |
| Do you have enough information about staff's skills, priorities and workloads? | Y | Job description is prepared at the same time as the vacancy notice. Skills and priorities are clearly defined. | | |

Schola Europaea / Office of the Secretary-General

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Are there significant issues or problems to staff recruitment and allocation that significantly affect the OSG/School's performance? | N | With the new 'Single Spine' previous problems in attracting and retaining qualified candidates for specific profiles were mainly solved. | | On system level evaluation of 'Single Spine' |
| Are staff absences sufficiently analysed? | Y | Re-integration of long-term absences was addressed. | Long-term absences need further analysis | Together with Coezio (external prevention service) analysis of long-term absences, Training for HoUs to define strategies to prevent psycho-social risks |

Relevant documents

- Memo: Incorporation of the requirements of the GDPR into the rules governing the procedure for recruitment of staff of the European Schools (2019-05-M-11-en-1)
- Guidelines for the recruitment of temporary administrative and ancillary staff (AAS) (2020-07-D-21-en-1)
- Révision des décisions du Conseil supérieur concernant la structure des études de l'organisation des cours aux Ecoles européennes (2011-01-D-33-fr-9)
- Annual Administrative and Financial School Plan (2016-1-D-11-en-1), Documentation of the Administration Boards
- Service Regulation for the Locally Recruited Teachers in the European Schools (2016-05-D-11-en-3)
- Service Regulations for the Administrative and Ancillary Staff (AAS) of the European Schools (2007-D-153-en-10)
- Regulations for Members of the Seconded Staff of the European Schools (2011-04-D-14-en-13)
- Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Managerial Staff of the European Schools (2020-04-D-23-en-1)

| 4. Staff performance and development | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|---|----------------------|--|--|---|
| The SG/DSG and each Director evaluate the performance of staff in accordance with the relevant staff regulations. The performance is discussed between the appraisee and his/her superior. Learning and development needs are recorded, weaknesses addressed as early as possible. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Are clear guidelines in place ensuring that all staff is evaluated? | Y | Implementing rules for the evaluation and progression of members of the AAS of the European Schools entered into force in 2020 (2019-02-D-31-en-3) | | Review the new Implementing Rules (2019-02-D-31-en-3) on system level |
| Are staff evaluations done on a regular basis? Are they effectively used to increase performance and staff satisfaction? | N | Due to Covid-19 evaluations of PAS were partly suspended. | Lack of harmonisation between the units. | Use appraisal committee to harmonise evaluations further. |
| Is enough time devoted to the process of staff evaluation in order to identify areas of improvement and training needs? | Y | Implementing Rules (2019-02-D-31-en-3) provide a step by step approach for preparing, conducting and following-up evaluations. | Lack of training on staff appraisals. | Training on staff appraisal. |
| Relevant documents | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing Rules for the Evaluation and Progression of Members of the AAS of the European Schools (2019-02-D-31-en-3) - Implementing Regulations for the Appointment and Evaluation of Directors and Deputy Directors of the ES (2009-D-422-en-5) - Quality Teaching in the European Schools (2015-09-D-03-en-1) - Implementing rules for the performance assessment of Deputy-Directors for Finance and Administrative of the European Schools (2018-08-D-8-en-1) | | | | |

III. Planning and Risk Management

| 5. Definition of objectives and quantitative and qualitative indicators | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|---|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| The SG/DSG and each Director clearly define strategic and operational objectives for his/her organisation, monitor and review them regularly. Key performance indicators are established for this purpose. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Are the objectives clearly defined (SMART - Principle) and up-to-date? | Y | The objectives are defined and presented in the multi-annual and annual plan of the European school system. | | Continue monitoring of the achievement of the objectives. |
| Are the objectives known and understood by the staff? | Y/N | The plans are shared with head of units/cellules | The multi annual and annual plans are sometimes not known by the lower level staff | Continue to circulate the plans among the staff. |
| Are the indicators meaningful with respect to the objectives? | Y | For each quantitative and qualitative objective, indicators are defined. | | |
| Do you monitor the achievement of your objectives regularly? | Y | The achievements are reported in the AAR | | |
| Are objectives that cannot be quantified, monitored by useful qualitative indicators? | Y | | | |
| Relevant documents | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidelines for the Annual Administrative and Financial School Plan (2016-11-D-26-en-1) - Guidelines for the Annual Pedagogical School Plan (2017-05-D-28) - Multi-annual and annual plan 2020 of the OSG (2020-03-D-13) | | | | |

| 6. Systematic Risk Management | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Apart from day-to-day risk management the SG/DSG and each Director put in place a systematic risk management process in line with applicable regulations. Main risks are defined, evaluated, recorded, appropriate action taken and risks monitored. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Is the guideline on risk management sufficiently understood? | Y | The guidelines are implemented in the ES system | | Continue to implement the guidelines |
| Does a risk register exist and is it up-to-date? | Y | The risk register is prepared and up to date for the system top risks. | | |
| Is the risk management linked to the planning and monitoring activities (preparation of the Annual Administrative and Financial School Plan and its follow-up)? | Y | Risk register is in place and linked to the multi-annual and annual plan of the OSG. | | |
| Relevant documents | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guideline on Risk Management in the European Schools (2015-09-D-34) - Register of top 11 ES risks - Register of top 8 ES system risks - Risk Register European Schools – Template - Multi-annual and annual plan 2020 of the OSG (2020-03-D-13) | | | | |

IV. Operations and Control Activities

| 7. Operational structure | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| The organisational structure supports effective decision-making by suitable delegation of powers. Responsibilities and authority limits are clearly defined, assigned and communicated in writing. Associated risks are addressed by mitigating controls. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Is the organisation's structure clearly defined and understood by all staff? | Y | The organisational chart is in place and clear | None | |
| Are up-to-date job descriptions in place? | Y | Job descriptions are in place and updated every 2 years for each staff | | |
| Are responsibilities clearly assigned? | Y | Responsibilities are found in each job description. | | |
| Are the nature and scope of delegated functions and powers clear to all persons concerned? Are they respected in practice? | Y | Delegation are clear in each department | | |
| Are the risks associated with the delegated functions and powers sufficiently analysed? Mitigating controls in place? | Y | Delegation are managed in accordance with segregation of duties guidelines in the financial circuits as well as all rules and procedures | | Keep improving the process of segregation of duties. |
| Relevant documents | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All rules and procedures set by the Secretary General and the Administration Board - Memorandum on the implementation of segregation of duties in the financial circuits and annexes (2018-09-M-2-en-1) | | | | |

| 8. Procedures | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|---|----------------------|--|--|--|
| The OSG/School's main processes are adequately and comprehensively documented and kept up-to-date; effective controls are established. These include arrangements to ensure segregation of duties and are compliant with the Financial Regulation and all relevant decisions of the Board of Governors. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Are main processes comprehensively documented particularly those associated with critical risks? Are they easily accessible for everybody? Are they up-to-date? | Y | With the centralisation of the financial governance model, procedures have been started to be implemented and harmonized across the ES | | Continue the development of procedures and processes |
| Are all staff aware of applicable procedures? Are they followed in practice? | Y | Procedures in place are communicated to the relevant colleagues to be followed. | | |
| Are efficient controls in place? Is the following clear: (1) Who performs the control? (2) How is the control performed? (3) What information, documents are needed to perform the control? (4) How frequently is the control done? | Y | Ex-post controls are in place to improve the implementation of segregation of duties | | Continue to improve the implementation of the SAP model. |
| Is the code of professional standards for ex-ante verification applied? | Y | | | |
| Relevant documents | | | | |
| Memorandum on the implementation of segregation of duties in the financial circuits and its annexes (2018-09-M-1-en) | | | | |

| 9. Exceptions | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|--|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| The SG/DSG and each Director establish appropriate arrangements to ensure that all instances of overriding of controls or deviations from established policies and procedures under exceptional circumstances are documented, justified and approved at an appropriate level before action is taken. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Do you keep a register of exceptions? | Y | The register of exceptions is prepared twice a year according to the template provided. | | |
| How do you ensure that all exceptions are recorded? | Y | The responsibilities of the management are clearly stated in the memorandum for the use of register of exceptions (2018-07-M-1-en). | | |
| Are exceptions authorized prior to be put into practice? | Y | Validation is required by authorizing officer for each exception. | | |
| Are the exceptions analysed on a yearly basis? Measures for improvement defined? | Y | The analysis is done according to the said memorandum. | | |
| Relevant documents | | | | |
| Template for the register of exceptions (presented in the Directors' meeting on 11/09/2014) Memorandum for the use of register of exceptions (2018-07-M-1-en) | | | | |

| 10. Control and supervision arrangements | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| The SG/DSG and each Director establishes appropriate supervision arrangements to ensure the OSG/School's activities run efficiently and comply with applicable provisions. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Have high-risk areas been identified where controls are focussed on (e.g. complex transactions, high value transactions, call for tenders, politically sensitive activities)? | Y | All transactions are verified by the Accounting Officer, the Verificator and the Authorizing Officer in the new SAP. | | Continue the improvements in SAP. |
| Have ex-post controls, other than the ones performed by the Internal Control Capability Unit, been put in place (based on the risk, sample basis)? | Y | Controls are performed each year by the ECA on human resources, procurement and payments. The IAS and Deloitte also perform various audits. | | |
| Is there a systematic follow-up of supervision of sensitive transactions? | Y | Ex-ante controls are performed exceptionally | | |
| Have appropriate action been taken to address findings and weaknesses resulting from the ex-post controls done by the Internal Control Capability Unit? | Y | The ICC unit/ex-post control issues an ex-post report with recommendations and comments. | | Continue the follow-up of implementation of recommendations resulting from ex-post controls |
| Relevant documents | | | | |

- General Rules of the European Schools (1-15) (2007-D-4010-en-2)
- Memorandum on the implementation of segregation of duties in the financial circuits and its annexes (2018-09-M-1-en)
- Financial regulation 2017 applicable to the budget of the European schools (2017-12-D-21)

| 11. Continuity of operations | | | | Assessment (red/yellow /green) |
|---|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| The SG/DSG establish appropriate arrangements to ensure continuity of operations to the extent possible whatever is the nature of a major disruption (e.g. emergency incidents, break-down of IT systems, change of processes). | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Does the OSG have an emergency plan covering major possible incident? | N | | | Start to develop a plan based on a vulnerability assessment in order to identify systems and services crucial for business operations. Focus will be on securing the ability to restore the sensitive services and data. |
| Is it known to all staff? | N | | | |
| Is it tested regularly? | N | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| With respect to IT continuity: Do you have a business continuity plan? Is it sufficiently tested? | N | | | Start to work on a DRP (Disaster Recovery Plan) that will be a part of the future BCP. |
| Does management and relevant staff know what to do in the immediate response to a major disruption? | N | | | Develop an incident response plan with different scenarios and response strategies. A communication plan should be part of this IR plan. |
| Relevant documents | | | | |

| 12. Mail and document management | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that incoming and outgoing mail is efficiently and adequately handled and that documents are securely and safely stored while complying with applicable legislation. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Are documents adequately protected against destruction, theft, fire etc.? | N | | | An efficient backup solution will be implemented. |
| Are procedures for coherent filing in place and sufficiently well known? | N | | | An analysis and investigation will be carried out for determining the needs for digital archiving. |
| In general, is the time spent on finding documents reasonable? | N/A | | | There is an ongoing investigation with focus on this question (among else). |
| Are rules in place how to handle sensitive documents? Are they sufficiently known? Applied in practice? | N | | Written procedures and guidelines for data classification are missing. | |
| Are applicable retention periods for documents known? Respected in practice? | Y | There is an archive procedure for paper document with retention periods and responsibilities; Retention periods for LRTs, seconded staff and AAS personal files are foreseen in the amended relevant regulations. | There is no archive procedure for soft documents. | An analysis and investigation will be carried out for determining the needs for digital archiving. |

Relevant documents

- General Rules of the European Schools (management of archives) (2007-D-4010-en-2)
- Procédure d'archivage de document papier au Bureau du Secrétaire General des Ecoles Européennes (2013-10-D-27-fr-6)
- Data protection and the DPO's role in the European Schools (2019-12-M-2-en-1);
- European Schools' Data breach policy (2020-05-M-3-en-1).
- Protection of privacy in the conduct of the meetings of the Administrative Boards (2010-M-32)
- Data protection in the European Schools (2018-05-M-2)

V. Information and Financial Reporting

| 13. Management information and communication | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| The SG/DSG, each Director and other managerial staff receive regular, reliable and easily accessible management information on budget, use of resources and other defined key performance indicators. As regards external communication, clear guidance is in place to ensure coherent, effective and authorized communication towards external media. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Do you have a reporting package in place that provides you with sufficient information to manage the School/OSG? | Y | Detailed reports are available and used periodically | | None needed. |
| Does the reporting allow you to supervise the achievement of your objectives? Is it promptly available? | Y | Budget implementation reports are available on request. | | |
| Are instructions regarding external communication known by all staff? Applied in practice? | Y | Yes, quarterly budget implementation reports are transmitted to external stakeholders. | No weakness identified | |
| Relevant documents | | | | |
| - Quarterly budget implementation report - Statistical reports SAP BO | | | | |

| 14. Accounting and Financial Reporting | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|---|----------------------|---|--|--|
| Adequate procedures and controls are in place to ensure that accounting data and related information used for preparing the OSG/School's annual accounts and financial reports are accurate, complete and timely available. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Does the Accounting Officer have the necessary skills and experience to perform his/her role? | Y | The Accounting Officer has the skills and experience to perform her duties. | None | |
| Are complete and up-to-date accounting procedures and manuals in place? | N | The full accounting manual has been distributed by the Central Accounting Officer at the end of 2020. | | Implementation of the accounting manual. |
| Are accounting data quality controls (analysis of general accounts, analysis of ageing reports of outstanding invoices, account reconciliations) pertinent and sufficiently documented? | Y | Since last quarter 2019, ageing reports on Account receivable and bank reconciliation reports (showing the zero balance on the bank transit accounts) are transmitted to the central accounting team. | | Continue to develop the reporting and analysis through SAP |
| Does the Accounting Officer receive all necessary information on a timely basis? | Y | The Accounting Officer has access to all necessary information from the Authorizing Officer to perform his duties. | | |
| Are the accounts and the Annual Activity Report prepared on time and submitted to the OSG? | Y | Accounts are prepared within the deadlines set by the OSG. The AAR for 2020 will be transmitted to the OSG within the predefined deadlines. | | |

Relevant documents

- Charter of tasks and responsibilities for the Central Accounting Officer, his/her delegates at the OSG and Local Accounting Officers' Correspondents (document presented to the Board of Governors in December 2018)
- Financial regulation 2017 applicable to the budget of the European schools (2017-12-D-21-en-1) and its implementing rules
- Memorandum on the implementation of segregation of duties in the financial circuits and its annexes (2018-09-M-1-en)
- Closing Assistance Manual
- Accounting manual

VI. Audit and Compliance with Internal Control Standards

| 15. Audits | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| The SG/DSG and each Director review the recommendations resulting from audits made by the European Court of Auditors, the Internal Audit Service or any other internal or external auditor. Appropriate action plans to remedy weaknesses are timely established and their implementation is regularly monitored. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Have findings/weaknesses been analysed and discussed within the management team and staff concerned? Are the findings clearly described / understandable? | Y | Audit reports are presented to the management and staff team concerned. | | |
| Have plans to remedy weaknesses been developed? Is the implementation monitored? | N | Action plans to audit reports are developed with the collaboration between management and staff concerned. | Action plans are established, but implementation are sometimes delayed. | Keep monitoring the implementation of audits recommendations in order to be able to close most of them. |
| Do you reply on-time to any audit reports? | Y | Comments are prepared and communicated to auditors within the timeframe authorized. | | |
| Do you report regularly about improvements in the Administration Board meetings? | Y | Follow-up on the implementation of audit recommendations are regularly presented in budgetary committees and board of governors. | | |
| Relevant documents | | | | |
| Reports from CoA, IAS, Deloitte | | | | |

| 16. Assessment of the compliance with the Internal Control Standards | | | | Assessment (red/yellow/green) |
|--|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| The SG/DSG and each Director assess the compliance with the Internal Control Standards as part of the preparation of the Annual Activity Report. | | | | |
| Optional Effectiveness Guidance – Answer the following questions to assess compliance with the standard | In place? Y/N | Description of implementation in School / OSG: | Identified gaps and weaknesses: | Action plan for 2021: |
| Are the different components of the Internal Control Standards (e.g. ex-ante controls, ex-post controls, risk management, management reviews and audits) in place? | Y | The internal control unit is responsible for the implementation of the internal control components by issuing various guidelines and procedures. | -Not enough human resources available in schools qualified to be responsible for internal control -Assessment of internal control standards are not harmonized within the ES | Continue the technical advice to schools for the harmonization of the assessment of internal control standards. |
| Are hints of weaknesses treated seriously and remedied promptly? | N | | Some weaknesses are not promptly remedied. | Follow-up the implementation of identified weaknesses in the Internal control system in the OSG and the schools. |
| Relevant documents | | | | |
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Summary Conclusion:

- a) Implemented and functioning to a large extent, but some weaknesses identified (assessment of standards: few green (6/16), mainly yellow (9/16) and one red (1/16))

The assessment of the Internal Control Standards revealed that standards are implemented and functioning to a large extent but the following weaknesses have been detected:

- Continuity of operations: No existence of emergency plan, no business continuity plan to develop recovery strategies.