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Report of the Chair of the Budgetary Committee of the European Schools under the French Presidency 2020-2021 school year

Approved by the Board of Governors on 08-9-10 December 2021 – Brussels
(online meeting)

The Chair of the Budgetary Committee and the entire French Presidency team wish to thank very much the members of the Committee, the teams and the managerial staff of the Office of the Secretary-General, who enabled the task assigned to the Presidency during the 2020-2021 school year to be successfully carried out. Our sincerest thanks also go to the teams of translators and interpreters, who maintain multilingualism in the system in a remarkable way, and to the IT teams, without whom this Committee's work could not have been done in the particular context of the pandemic during the 2020-2021 school year.

Under the Rules of Procedure, the Budgetary Committee's main responsibilities are to: (a) address all budgetary and financial questions and take decisions on them within the framework of the total budget approved by the Board of Governors; (b) address administrative and legal questions requiring a decision of the Board of Governors and express an opinion for the latter's benefit; (c) define the general budgetary objectives for Type I schools and evaluate their implementation by the schools; and (d) report annually to the Board of Governors.

Within that framework, during the 2020-2021 school year, the Budgetary Committee convened on 4 and 5 November 2020 and on 9 and 10 March 2021. The occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic prevented the holding of physical meetings but the responsiveness of the Office of the Secretary-General in deploying virtual meeting tools enabled the Budgetary Committee to convene remotely in very good conditions.

At those meetings, the Budgetary Committee considered and discussed a large number of matters. The decisions and results of those discussions are set out in the summary documents produced by the Office of the Secretary-General (2020-11-D-10 and 2021-03-D-16).

1. The Budgetary Committee successfully completed its usual work of preparation of the decisions of the Board of Governors, in the context of emergence of the Covid-19 crisis, which necessitated exceptional measures.

- Adoption of Amending Budget No 1, which enabled more than €5m of exceptional measures associated with the Covid-19 crisis to be financed, this amount being partially financed by savings (€3m).
- Favourable opinion on granting a discharge to the Authorising Officers, the Administrative Boards and the Secretary-General for the implementation of the 2019 budget.
- Review of the different annual reports and follow-up on audits.
- Rigorous documented review of the new measures proposed by the Office of the Secretary-General, which resulted in favourable opinions expressed by the Committee. The following can be quoted, non-exhaustively: (i) during the first semester: creation of new executive/managerial functions at the European School, Brussels II – Evere Site, extension of the mandate of the working group on revision of the Financial Regulation, recommendation on the minimum proportion of time to be devoted to coordination of educational support, proposal for revision of the legal status of educational support assistants; (ii) during the second semester: PISA-based Test for European Schools (PBTS) project, clarification of the Board of Governors' 2008 decisions concerning canteens, Education for Sustainable Development –

State of Play and proposals for actions, measures designed to increase the European Schools' attractiveness for teaching staff – evaluation, Action Plan for Inclusive Education and Educational Support, revision of the Policy on Educational Support in the European Schools.

- Discussion of and recommendation for amendment of the preliminary draft budget for 2022.

2. Initiatives and results of the French Presidency in the Budgetary Committee's area of competence

France focused on three priorities during its Presidency year, one of which was entitled 'governance and budgetary management' of the European School system.

In the context of that priority, the Budgetary Committee took a lead role. The Presidency proposed an innovation in terms of working arrangements through the publication of a questionnaire addressed to the delegations on the different improvements or reforms to be instigated. The majority of delegations contributed through high-quality responses to this new exercise, thus showing an interest in the method and the substance. Thanks to the results of this questionnaire, the Presidency proposed, with the Office's assistance, immediate actions and the setting up of a working group for larger scale reforms. The working group was unanimously set up at the Board of Governors' April 2021 meeting.

Results:

- Introduction of performance indicators for the budget.
- Increased awareness of green budgeting and pilot project.
- New format for documents.
- Reform of the rules of procedure of the Budgetary Committee.
- Work on identification and analysis of information flows and mutual obligations between the Commission and the Office of the European Schools.
- Setting up of the 'Simplification' Working Group, which will be expected to produce recommendations for the Board of Governors' spring 2022 meeting. The objective, clearly set out in the mandate, is to produce savings for the system, in the budgetary, human resources and efficiency and effectiveness of organisation areas. The draft interim report is promising in that respect and France will continue to support this Group's work and the reforms proposed.

France thanks most sincerely all the system's protagonists for this Presidency year, at the service of the schools' system, which it strongly supports.

France wishes the Croatian Presidency every success.

It was an unforgettable experience and an honour to serve as Chair of this Committee.

Cyril BERNARD-TROTOUIN

Opinion of the Budgetary Committee

The Budgetary Committee takes note of the report and thanks the French Presidency for the good work done and calls upon the Board of Governors to adopt it.

Opinion of the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors took note of and approved the report of the French Chair of the Budgetary Committee for the 2020-2021 school year, Mr Bernard-Trotuin.