



Ref.: 2024-01-D-30-en-4

Original: EN



Action Plan: Reflection on the Future of the European Schools' System

Follow-up to the Report of the European Parliament

Approved by the Board of Governors at the meeting of 10, 11 and 12 April 2024 – Parma (Italy)

<p>Joint Board of Inspectors Meeting on: 7 February 2024</p> <p>Proposal: The members of the JBI are invited to deliberate on the Action Plan and express a favourable opinion on the actions proposed and on the timeline, associated with each action.</p> <p>Outcome: The Joint Board of Inspectors discussed the Action Plan appreciated the proposed action (1.8) to enhance the stability of small language sections. Furthermore, regarding action 1.10, the JBI emphasised the importance of exploring the possibility of securing permanent external expertise for elaboration of written exam papers and syllabi. This approach is intended to relieve Inspectors, who may not be experts in these specific areas, from these responsibilities. Concerning cluster 2, the Finnish Delegation made the point that the management structure should be flexible and adapted to the size of the School. The Joint Board of Inspectors issued a favourable opinion on the proposed actions and on the timetable associated with each action.</p>	<p>Ref.: 2024-01-D-30-en-1</p>
<p>Joint Teaching Committee Meeting on: 8-9 February 2024</p> <p>Proposal: The members of the JTC are invited to deliberate on the Action Plan and express a favourable opinion on the actions proposed and on the timeline, associated with each action.</p> <p>Outcome: The Joint Teaching Committee deliberated on the Action Plan and expressed a favourable opinion on the proposed actions, while encouraging a more detailed specification of the timeline associated with the actions, particularly as regards mid- and long-term actions.</p>	<p>Ref.: 2024-01-D-30-en-1</p>
<p>Budgetary Committee Meeting on: 5-6 March 2024</p> <p>Proposal: The members of the BC are invited to deliberate on the Action Plan and express a favourable opinion on the actions proposed and on the timeline, associated with each action.</p> <p>Outcome: The Budgetary Committee expressed a favourable opinion on the Action Plan, the actions proposed and the timelines. The document (Action 2.8) has been adapted according to AAS representative's request to be explicitly part of the 'Mobility package', supporting the use of green transport, as it concerns all staff members.</p>	<p>Ref.: 2024-01-D-30-en-2</p>
<p>Board of Governors Meeting on: 10-12 April 2024</p> <p>Proposal: The members of the BoG are invited to deliberate on the Action Plan, including the creation of a Task Force tasked with elaborating the document <i>Mission and Vision of the European Schools System</i>, and to express a favourable opinion on the actions proposed and on the timeline, associated with each action.</p> <p>Outcome: Upon the request of the Directors' representative, Cluster 1, point 9 regarding 'Greater degree of autonomy to schools and teachers' has been delegated to the Pedagogical Reform Working Group for examination.</p>	<p>Ref.: 2024-01-D-30-en-3</p>

<p>Regarding Cluster 2, action point 2, the Office of the Secretary-General has been tasked with exploring internal resources to develop a Communication Policy, rather than establishing a new position for this purpose. The new deadline for presenting the draft communication policy is April 2025.</p> <p>Regarding Cluster 2, action point 17, it was agreed to amend the action text to align it with the approved text of the ‘Parma Declaration’:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“The analysis of alternative governance models, including a review of the Convention, by an ‘external body’ will require a clear decision of the BoG including the allocation of financial means in the budget of the OSG.”</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>“The opportunity of launching an external evaluation of the system and the possible review of the legal framework of the European Schools will be thoroughly evaluated”</i></p> <p>With these adjustments, the Board of Governors unanimously approved the Action Plan for the Future of the European Schools System and mandated a Task Force with drafting the document <i>Mission and Vision of the European Schools System</i>. This Task Force may have an extended mandate beyond what was initially proposed, as the document is anticipated to require further deliberation within the Board of Governors.</p>	
<p>Final version approved by: BoG, 10-12 April 2024</p>	<p>Ref.: 2024-01-D-30-en-4</p>

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Abbreviations and definitions used in the text:

AES: Accredited European Schools	EAA: European Education Area
BoG: Board of Governors of the European Schools	EP: European Parliament
CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning	ES/ESS: European Schools
CPD: Continuous Professional Development	LRT: Locally-Recruited Teacher
CULT COM: EP Committee on Culture and Education	MS: Member States of the European Union
EB: European Baccalaureate	M&V: Mission and Vision of the ESS
EC: European Commission	OSG: Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools
	QA: Quality Assurance
	WG: Working Group

Executive Summary

The aim of this document is to outline follow-up actions stemming from the *Report on the system of European Schools: State of play, Challenges and Perspectives*, prepared by the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament¹ ('EP Report') in order to define the mission and perspectives of the European Schools' System (ESS) in the context of the challenges of the 21st century and provide a vision of the system including the plans for its modernisation and developing a model for contemporary education to play an important role in the creation of the European Education Area (EEA).

Context

The recommendations outlined in the EP Report have been deliberated on multiple occasions, most notably, during the meeting of the Heads of Delegation on 6 April 2023², the extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors on 20 October 2023³, and the extraordinary meeting of the Joint Board of Inspectors on 1 December 2023⁴. The Board of Governors tasked the Enlarged Presidency Working Group with analysing each recommendation of the EP Report and with formulating an Action Plan, in light of the insights gathered from the above-mentioned discussions, along with individual comments from stakeholders.

Introduction

In order to arrive at a transparent and coherent structure, the main recommendations and ideas from the EP Report, along with the outcomes of the meetings of the Heads of Delegation and the Board of Governors of the European Schools in the particular subject/topic, are broken down into three main thematical headings ('Clusters'). With this arrangement of the content, we arrive at the following structure:

CLUSTER 1: PEDAGOGY (mission, functions, objectives and quality assurance)

CLUSTER 2: ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE (management, organisation and structure)

CLUSTER 3: RESOURCES (human resources, infrastructure and legal background)

Each Cluster is then further subdivided into Units that provide the basis of the Action Plan. Considering the outcomes of various consultations mentioned above, the Enlarged Presidency WG evaluated each Unit and pondered their various aspects, amongst others their relevance, feasibility and priority. Where deemed appropriate, the WG formulated concrete actions, specifying the responsible actor and the expected outcome. Additionally, the last column of the table indicates the deadline for each action, using a colour-coded system.

GREEN: Work in progress (WIP) Rules and mechanism are already in place, and the OSG (ESS) is committed to ensure their proper application, regular review/monitoring and improvement if deemed necessary. In such cases no particular new action is indicated in this document on top of the regular follow-up referred to above.

RED: Short-term action

¹ TA-9-2023-0306: System of the European Schools – State of play, Challenges and Perspectives

² 2023-04-D-30-en-1: ES vision workshop follow-up

³ 2023-10-D-40-en-2

⁴ 2023-12-D-26-en-1

ORANGE: Mid-term action

YELLOW: Long-term action

BLUE: Non-defined. The idea is not intended to be definitely dismissed, but to be revisited in the future; as under the current structure, the implementation poses significant challenges.

NO COLOUR: N/A

The Action Plan will be discussed by the Joint Board of Inspectors, the Joint Teaching Committee, and the Budgetary Committee for their opinions. Finally, it will be presented to the Board of Governors in April 2024 for decision.

1. CLUSTER 1: PEDAGOGY (mission, functions, objectives and quality assurance)

Objective	Update the mission and vision of the ES system including its potential role in the development of the EEA. Strengthen teaching standards and quality assurance.
Summary	Based on a critical in-depth assessment of the ESS an updated vision of its principles, characteristics and functions is to be summarised in a comprehensive document (<i>'Mission and Vision of the ESS⁵'</i>), providing a unique model of contemporary education which may be followed and adopted by other systems within the European Education Area and beyond. Strengthen teaching standards by better quality assurance and enhanced inspection provisions, as well as reinforcement of the Pedagogical Development Unit of the OSG and the role of the JTC.

UNITS	Actions and Outcome	Outcome Deadline
1. Carry out a critical, in-depth assessment of all aspects of the ESS in order to future-proof the system as a model for educational systems. (1) ⁶	OSG to continuously analyse various aspects (SWOT analysis) based on the available reports and resources.	
2. Update the mission, principles and objectives of the ESS that are fit for the 21st century. The ESS should become a beacon for high-quality multilingual and multicultural education in Europe and beyond, demonstrating that being 'united in diversity' can also be a living reality in the educational sphere. (2, 36)	BoG to Mandate a Task Force with the creation of the document <i>Mission and Vision of the European Schools System</i> , outlining its principles, values, characteristics, functions and other relevant aspects. <i>Outcome:</i> Mission and Vision of the ES to be adopted by the BoG.	December 2024
3. Assess the role of the ESS in the establishment of the EEA (e.g. language learning, European dimension) with the involvement of the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture . Foster closer relationship	Involve European Schools' representatives, possibly on a regular basis, into the work of DG EAC to	December 2024

⁵ The original term "*ESS Charter*" used in the EP Report was replaced by the term "*Mission and Vision of the ESS*", which is to reflect that it is meant as a policy document and **NOT** as a legal document replacing the 'Convention defining the Status of the European School.

⁶ Reference to the numbers of the points in the *Report on the system of European Schools: state of play, challenges and perspectives* (EP Report, CULT Committee)

<p>between the ESS and local, regional and national educational ecosystems including a greater student and teacher mobility within the ESS and to and from other school systems. (3, 4, 7, 23.d., 31)</p>	<p>improve exchange of information, and to allow sharing best practices between the ES and national stakeholders. EC to assess in which areas more involvement from DG EAC is relevant.</p>	<p>M&V⁷</p>
<p>4. The Member States should exploit the full potential of experienced ESS teachers to become trainers and mentors in national systems following the incentives and guidelines established by the BoG. (25)</p>	<p>Participation of the ES in the Europass Teachers Academy project⁸.</p>	<p>M&V</p>
<p>5. Implement a coherent, and systematic inclusion policy across the ESS that results in quality inclusive education, personalised learning, a flexible curriculum, increases the amount of educational and psychological support, provides an end-of-studies diploma, avoids exclusion due to disabilities. (26)</p> <p><u>Comment:</u> Continuous follow-up of measures implemented so far:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Educational Support Policy was revised in 2021, after an ‘Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education’ had been approved by the BoG in April 2019, to make the ESS more inclusive. The majority of the actions have been implemented. • The number of psychologists per pupil was decided by the BoG in April 2022 and will be gradually increased until 2025. • According to a decision of the BoG in December 2022, a ‘Junior Laureate Certificate’ was introduced in the 2022/23 school year. <p>The teacher-to-students ratio is one of the remaining open items of the Action Plan.</p>	<p>ESS to implement remaining items of the Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education.</p>	<p>M&V</p>
	<p>OSG to put in place an implementation assessment carried out by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNE).</p>	
	<p>OSG and Inspectors to put in place a regular periodic evaluation (every 5 years) that would report on the status of the application of the amended regulations and any recurring issues.</p>	

⁷ The present Action Plan covers various aspects of the ESS and those that are intended for inclusion in the Mission&Vision document indicated by ‘M&V’ in the final column labelled ‘Outcome/Deadline’

⁸ For further information, visit: <https://www.teacheracademy.eu/about-us/>

<p>6. Ensure a full, high-quality educational experience for all students, in particular in their mother tongue, including students without a language section (SWALS) with a periodic review of 2nd and 3rd language teaching (6, 29, 30)</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> ESS has comprehensive QA mechanisms in place (e.g. Whole School Inspections, individual evaluations) which are subject to regular review. The ES is dedicated to teaching mother tongue throughout language sections, if not possible, in form of SWALS education. The BAC results and the outcome of PISA for ES 2022 prove that L2 teaching is one of the most successful assets of the ESS system. The use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is widely recognised as an effective immersion language learning experience.</p>		M&V
<p>7. Promote environmental learning, digital education, European dimension (heritage and values), citizenship education (including the role of minorities), entrepreneurship and soft skills; maintain the current provision of religious and ethical education. (31, 32)</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> The different aspects are examined by the relevant WG-s (e.g. Sustainable Development WG, IT PEDAGOGY WG, etc)</p>		M&V
<p>8. Open the ESS to more categories of students (for the socio-economic mix to be broadened) by the full potential of the AES. Enhanced collaboration with and support to the AES. More improved quality assurance and inspection. (21, 36)</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> The improvement of the cooperation among 'traditional' ES and AES is being discussed by the AES WG, which will provide the BoG with proposals in April 2024. The AES WG will also provide proposals on aspects of quality assurance in the context of audits.</p> <p>Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All traditional ES are open for all categories of pupils except for the ESs in Brussels due to overcrowding. • Places are granted for all category 1 pupils in all ES. • A model of socio-economic mix is already in place in most AES. 	<p>AES WG to present proposals in the area of QA and enhanced collaboration to the BoG in April 2024 The aspect of 'quality assurance' in the AES is currently being analysed by the 'AES WG', and concrete proposals to enhance QA within the context of the AES Audits are expected for April 2024.</p>	<p>April 2024</p> <p>M&V</p>
	<p>The OSG to investigate the possibility to improve the stability of small language sections.</p>	

<p>9. Greater degree of autonomy to schools and teachers and stronger assessment and accountability mechanisms.</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> The degree of autonomy of the schools is based on a good balance between central requirements (syllabi, programmes, Baccalaureate) and flexibility in local application (forward planning, methodology, teaching and learning procedures, etc.).</p>	<p>The Pedagogical Reform WG to examine the question of greater degree of autonomy to schools and teachers by April 2025</p>	<p>M&V</p>
<p>10. Strengthen the educational and pedagogical standards by the review of quality assurance approach and a Quality Assurance Unit in the OSG (seconded inspectors). Reinforce the role of the OSG's Pedagogical Development Unit (23)</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> The BoG decided in April 2023 to provide the Pedagogical Development Unit with three additional posts as of January 2024. Recruitment in progress.</p>	<p>When delivered, analyse the IAS assessment of the relation between the PDU and the inspectorate.</p> <p>Based on the IAS Report expected for 2025, seek for strengthening the Inspectorate's capacity by recruiting seconded experts in the PDU, subject to budgetary limitations.</p>	<p>Following the IAS report's delivery</p>
<p>11. Annual celebratory event with best practices. (33)</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> Pilot project in progress as one of the priorities of the Italian Presidency. OSG takes note of the interest of future presidencies in continuing this initiative, based on the evaluation of the pilot event, and making the event a recurring one.</p>		
<p>12. Inclusion of vocational education and training (VET) modules in the ESS. (28)</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> Implementing this recommendation poses significant challenges, including legal, HR, and curricula modification hurdles. Given the complexities involved and the current structure, the recommendation is to be revisited in the future when the ESS might be better positioned to accommodate the necessary changes.</p>		
<p>13. Establishment of a formal ESS alumni community. (34)</p>	<p>OSG, together with the ES to promote and support the existing Alumni association.</p>	

2. CLUSTER 2: ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE (management, organisation and structure)

Objective	Perform an in-depth review of the governance and management structures across the ESS and at each individual school. Review of decision-making, auditing processes and governance structure
Summary	Based on an in-depth review of the governance and management structures across the ESS and at each individual school to examine the roles, responsibilities, and structures in place at all levels, including potential conflicts of interest, and to identify regulatory issues that are a hindrance to the ESS. Increasing flexibility of decision-making (BoG) and revision of the mandate of the auditors (ECA and IAS) as well as the system and mechanism of cost-sharing and financial contribution by Member States is necessary. The change of the governance system (inter-governmental to supranational model) is to be considered and discussed.

UNITS	Actions and Outcome	Outcome Deadline
1. Perform an in-depth review of the governance and management structures across the ESS (8)	OSG, in consultation with the different stakeholders, to internally review the current structures and practices, notably the organisation and follow-up of the Administrative bodies (i.e. Pedagogical meetings, BC and BoG), as well as other meetings, and to seek for improvements in efficiency.	
2. Calls for increased accountability and transparency, tighter parliamentary scrutiny and control , and improved communication to increase the visibility and understanding of the ESS and the European Baccalaureate at all levels.(5) <i>Comment:</i> The Global Annual Activity Report of the ESS and the Annual Activity Report of the OSG, alongside with several other reports, are published on the website of the OSG every year.	OSG to seek for improvement of the communication policy by exploring internal resources.	In 2025
	EC to promote participation of the ES in different WGs of the DG EAC, in order to facilitate sharing of best practices with	Immediate

	national system and to improve the visibility of the ESS.	
<p>3. It is the Member States of their obligation to grant and maintain non-discriminatory university admission under the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools. Ensure fair and equal transposition of learning results from the ESS and the European Baccalaureate in their equivalence tables. (6)</p> <p><u>Comment:</u> The OSG is committed to ensure equal transposition of learning results to guarantee non-discriminatory university admission. The OSG will stay vigilant and intervene in case any issues arise, in order to protect the rights of ES pupils.</p> <p>The EC is also committed to ensure that MS meet their obligations for equal treatment between EB holders and national diplomas, and to take actions whenever this is not the case.</p>		
<p>4. Clear responsibilities, transparent decision-making, biennial performance appraisals, and training and development plans for all management staff. (10)</p> <p><u>Comment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decision-making process in the context of the appointment and evaluation of managerial staff is transparent and adheres to the '<i>Implementing Regulations for the Appointment and evaluation of Directors and Deputy Directors of the ES</i>', as approved by the BoG (ref. 2009-D-422-en-5). • Implementing biennial performance appraisals for Directors and Deputy Directors, who are currently evaluated in their second and fifth years of service, would require additional resources or a procedural change. 	<p>BoG to reactivate the currently inactive 'Revision Profile Directors' WG to review the <i>Implementing Regulations for the Appointment and evaluation of Directors and Deputy Directors</i>, with particular focus on the revision of the selection procedure and a potential simplification of the evaluation procedure and the consideration of more frequent evaluations.</p> <p>Moreover, the BoG to mandate the same WG to establish an evaluation procedure for members of the managerial staff of the OSG.</p>	April 2025

	Concrete proposals are to be submitted in April 2025.	
5. Additional middle management posts focused on high-quality teaching methodologies and curricula to be introduced at schools. (19)	The BoG to mandate the 'Internal Structures' WG to review the management structure in the schools and to provide the BoG with an analysis and proposals by April 2025 at the latest.	April 2025
6. Monitor the schools' activities to guarantee good management, appropriate pedagogical qualifications , affordability and inclusiveness and recognition of the work of the school community, especially parents, in school life. (20) <u>Comment:</u> The OSG will ensure particular vigilance, monitoring and appropriate follow-up in case any issues arise.		
7. Annual review of the enrolment policy and school fees in order to guarantee a place for all category-one students. Emphasis on strictly enforcing the sibling rule , the possibility of appealing decisions by the Central Enrolment Authority without financial obstacles. (21) <u>Comment:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The enrolment policy in ESs in Brussels: subject to an annual decision of the BoG. All cat.1 pupils are guaranteed to be enrolled in the ES The application of the 'sibling rule' in the ESs Brussels was subject to a revision by the BoG in December 2022 to ensure the optimal use of all sites of the existing four schools. The new 'sibling concept' was considered to be proportionate in a judgement of the Complaints Board in 2023. 	The BoG to mandate the 'School Fees WG' to review the school fees for category 2 and category 3 pupils and to provide an analysis and concrete proposals by April 2025 at the latest (Cat. 3 fees last revised by the BoG in 2013 and are a subject to a yearly increase of 2%).	April 2025
8. Ambitious and regularly updated ESS mobility plan (transportation) at all levels to make school transportation more efficient, more affordable, more accessible and greener. (22) <u>Comment:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the ESs, transport services for students is run by Parents' Associations 	BoG to mandate the 'Joint (Seconded teachers and LRT) WG' and the AAS WG to create a green mobility package for all categories of staff, including AAS,	April 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently there is no coherent policy in place to promote green mobility for all categories of members of staff 	<p>and to provide the BoG with concrete proposals by April 2025 at the latest.</p>	
<p>9. Foster a safe learning environment with no form of violence, bullying and cyber-bullying. (whole-school approach of awareness-raising, training, peer support system involving active and well-trained teachers and parents, and a clear and enforceable sanctioning system at all levels). (27)</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> Already in April 2022, the BoG approved a ‘Pupils’ Well-Being Policy Framework of the European Schools’ (doc. 2021-12-D-31-en-5) which covers all aspects of the EP recommendation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools are in the process of revising and/or developing their local policies in light of this framework. • The implementation of the new/revised policies is followed-up in the Administration Boards of the schools. • The OSG, alongside with the Direcors, will continuously pay particular attention to the implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the elements evoked. 		M&V
<p>10. Streamline and increase the flexibility of the BoG’s decision-making through an alternative voting system with enhanced consultation of ESS stakeholders as well as an accurate communication of decisions within the ESS. (9)</p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vast majority of decisions of the BoG require a two-third majority (Article 9.1 of the Convention of the ES). The requirement of unanimity is limited to a few cases⁹. • All stakeholders (including parents’, teachers’ and students’ reps) are consulted on system and school level. • Parents’ and teachers’ representatives have a limited voting right in the BoG (Art. 9.1 (d)) and a full voting right in the Administration Boards. 		

⁹ the establishment of a new a new school (Art. 2.1), the accreditation of a new AES, the ‘modification of the fundamental structure of a school’ (Art. 3.3 (a), the ‘modification of the official status of the teachers’ (Art. 3.3 (b) and decisions on a ‘financial contribution’ from the Member States (Art. 25.1).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Decisions of the BoG are published on the website, the Statements of the Delegations are accurately communicated with all stakeholders' representatives. 		
<p>11. The OSG and the BoG troika¹⁰ should present a detailed, joint annual ESS report to Parliament. (11)</p>	<p>The SG to present to the EP, after consultation of the BoG, a report on the follow-up to the EP Report in May 2024.</p> <p>OSG to share the Global Annual Activity Report of the ESS and the Annual Activity Report of the OSG with the EP and the European Council.</p>	<p>May 2024</p>
<p>12. Assess compliance with health, safety and security standards in the schools. (12)</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> The compliance is regularly assessed by the schools and reported during the Admin Boards of the schools. The OSG, alongside with the Directors, will ensure particular vigilance and pay attention to the implementation, monitoring and follow-up of these crucial elements.</p>		
<p>13. Review the mandate of the European Court of Auditors and the Commission's Internal Audit Service to provide annual opinions and recommendations on various aspects of the ESS and asks that these opinions and recommendations be presented as part of the deliberations on the joint annual ESS report to Parliament. (13)</p> <p><i>Comment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mandate of the Court of Auditors is not subject to a decision of the BoG. The mandate of the IAS is subject to a decision of the BoG. Already now, the mandate of the IAS is defined in Multi-Annual-Audit Plans which address besides financial governance also questions of governance in other areas (BAC, IT, PEDDA). 		

¹⁰ The original Troika has evolved into the 'Enlarged Presidency WG'.

<p>14. Review the current cost-sharing agreement. (15)</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> The current Cost Sharing Agreement was revised by a decision of the BoG in December 2022. The updated mechanism will enter into force as of the 2024/25 school year, with a review planned during the 2025/26 school year. Any further changes in the current cost-sharing model, in particular introducing financial contributions from MS consistently not meeting their secondment quotas, require unanimity in the BoG. As a result, any improvement in this area would necessitate changes in the governance and decision-making structure of the ESS.</p>		M&V
<p>15. Financial contributions from the EU to the ESS to feature as a separate budget line in future EU budgets, in order to increase transparency, ensure strategic planning and facilitate parliamentary scrutiny under the discharge procedure, and requests that the ESS be included in the further development of the EEA and that both become closely interlinked. (35)</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> The budget structure of the EC and other supporting agencies and institutions falls within their autonomy.</p>		N/A
<p>16. The European Parliament is to be represented on the BoG. (37)</p> <p><i>Comment</i> Currently, the EP and other European Institutions are represented in the BoG by the EC.</p>		N/A
<p>17. An independent, external expert body is to explore and propose alternative governance models, including a review of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools and the possibility of replacing the schools' intergovernmental legal status with a supranational European model. (37)</p>	<p>The opportunity of launching an external evaluation of the system and the possible review of the legal framework of the European Schools will be thoroughly evaluated</p>	

3. CLUSTER 3: RESOURCES (human resources, infrastructure and legal background)

Objective	Clarification of legal background. Solution to combat teacher shortages. Obligations of Member States to be met.
Summary	The legal background of the ESS (primary and secondary EU legislation, competence of CB and national courts) is to be clarified. Adequate infrastructure should be provided on all school premises. A fair and more equal remuneration system of the teaching staff is to be introduced as well as better working conditions, job safety, CPD.

UNITS	Actions and Outcome	Outcome Deadline
<p>1. Clarify the applicability of primary and secondary EU legislation to the ESS. Amend the staff regulations and the General Rules of the European Schools to explicitly clarify the competences of the Complaints Board vis-à-vis national courts, ensuring that there is no gap in legal protection. (12)</p> <p><u>Comment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicability of primary and secondary EU legislation is already addressed in Article 6 of the Convention defining the Statute of the ES. Moreover, it is clarified in the jurisdiction of the Complaints Board of the ES, which has been confirmed by a recent decision of the European Court of Justice. • The Staff Regulations clearly establish the competence of the Complaints Board for Seconded Staff and Locally Recruited Teachers. With respect to LRT, this competence was confirmed by a judgement of the ECJ. • The competences of the Complaints Board in other, not staff related areas, are: mainly reflected in the General Rules (GR). • A proposal to review and potentially extend the competences of the Complaints Board was rejected with respect to several aspects by the BoG in 2014/15. 	<p>The BoG to revitalise and mandate the 'Legal Protection WG', to review the competences of the Complaints Board and to provide an analysis and potential proposals to the BoG in April 2025 at the latest.</p>	<p>April 2025</p>

<p>2. Put in place an independent ombudsperson to address complaints about maladministration and mediate in conflicts. (11)</p>	<p>BoG to mandate the 'Legal Protection WG' to analyse this EP recommendation.</p>	<p>April 2025</p>
<p>3. Ensure that locally recruited teachers' contractual and working conditions are fully in line with EU and Member State employment laws and principles. (12)</p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contractual and working conditions of LRT are laid down in the 'Service Regulations for Locally Recruited Teachers in the ES' (doc. 2016-05-D-11-en-12). • The regulations have been subject to several judgements of the Complaints Board and have been found to be in line with EU employment law while taking precedent over national employment law. • Notwithstanding this, the risk of termination of contract due to secondments and the annual change of teaching hours/periods makes it difficult to create safe working conditions and have a negative impact on the attractiveness of locally recruited teaching functions. 	<p>The BoG to mandate the 'LRT WG' to analyse the possibility and provide proposals by April 2025 concerning the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of relevant job experience of LRT • Further improvement of job security of LRT • Further extension of the concept of protected teaching functions 	<p>April 2025</p>
<p>4. Develop a code of good administrative conduct for school management at all levels. (11)</p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>The 'Guidelines on Ethics and Security' were established in 2013 (doc. 2013-01-D-9-en-1) and replaced by new 'Guidelines on Ethics and Integrity' in 2022 (doc. 2022-06-D-23-en-1) which already covers the relevant aspects of good administrative conduct.</p> <p>The OSG, alongside with the Directors, will continuously pay particular attention to the implementation, monitoring and follow-up of these elements.</p>		
<p>5. Member States should meet their obligations vis-à-vis the ESS with regard to the secondment of qualified teachers and other educational staff with more transparent and open secondment procedures. (14, 19)</p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The obligations of MS with respect to the secondment of teachers are defined in the ‘Cost Sharing Agreement’, which was revised by the BoG’s decision in December 2022. • The revised Cost Sharing mechanism will enter into force in the 2024/25 school year and be subject to a review in the 2025/26 school year. • A binding (mandatory) system for financial contribution could not find the required unanimity within the BoG. • Any further changes in the current cost-sharing model, in particular introducing financial contributions from MS consistently not meeting their secondment quotas, require unanimity in the BoG. As a result, any improvement in this area would necessitate changes in the governance and decision-making structure of the ESS. 		
<p>6. Member States should meet their obligations vis-à-vis the ESS with regard to the provision of adequate infrastructure (including a binding system of direct financial contributions) Include ES infrastructure in the national school infrastructure plans. (14) (16)</p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States should honour their commitment and ensure the infrastructure (and its maintenance) for European Schools. The EC is committed to exchange with Member States as to guarantee that it is the case. • The lack of infrastructure and the maintenance of existing infrastructure have been identified as main risks in both the risk register of the ESS and the risk registers of certain schools. (Register regularly updated concerning the schools in Belgium) • The EC stands ready to assist Member States wishing to benefit from the Recovery and Resilience Facility for their investment plans to include the ESS. • The OSG, in close cooperation with the EC, will continue its active involvement into discussions and negotiations with the MS to ensure the highest quality infrastructure for the ESS pupils. 	<p>OSG to incorporate a review of MS’s fulfilment of their infrastructure-related obligations into the Secretary-General’s annual report. Depending on the findings, and if necessary, the BoG will call on individual MS to meet their obligations.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>7. Resolution of teacher shortages by ensuring a stable and fair employment situation for seconded and locally recruited staff members alike.</p>	<p>The BoG to mandate the Joint (Seconded Teachers and LRT) WG to</p>	<p>April 2025</p>

<p>a. competitive remuneration b. more equal salaries (N/P and Secondary) c. clarity on and stability of employment d. CPD strategy, induction programme and further career prospects (17, 24)</p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a-c. The attractiveness of teaching functions was addressed in an “Attractiveness Package” which was approved by the BoG in April 2019 and entered into force in September 2019. The package was evaluated and partly improved by a decision of the BoG of April 2021. • d. The BoG has recently taken decisions to establish a more coherent CPD concept. (e.g. April 2023) CPD and career prospects in and beyond the ESS are one out of two priorities of the Italian presidency. 	<p>provide concrete proposals by April 2025 concerning the discrepancy of salaries between the teachers of nursery/primary and the secondary and to review the salaries of Educational Advisors at the same time.</p>	<p>M&V</p>
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Overview of Proposed Actions (time schedule)

Unit		Action
SHORT TERM		
1.2	Update the mission , principles and objectives of the ESS	BoG to Mandate a Task Force with the creation of the document <i>Mission and Vision of the European Schools System</i> , outlining its principles, values, characteristics, functions and other relevant aspects. <i>Outcome:</i> Mission and Vision of the ES to be adopted by the BoG.
1.3	Assess the role of the ESS in the establishment of the EEA	EC to assess the role of the ESS in the establishment of the EEA. EC to assess in which areas more involvement from DG EAC is relevant. <i>Outcome:</i> Report of the EC DGHR
1.8	Open the ESS to more categories of students by the full potential of the AES .	AES WG to present proposals in the area of QA and enhanced collaboration to the BoG in April 2024 The aspect of 'quality assurance' in the AES is currently being analysed by the 'AES WG', and concrete proposals to enhance QA within the context of the AES Audits are expected for April 2024.
1.9	Greater degree of autonomy to schools and teachers and stronger assessment and accountability mechanisms.	The Pedagogical Reform WG to examine the question of greater degree of autonomy to schools and teachers by April 2025
1.10	Strengthen educational and pedagogical standards by the review of quality assurance . Reinforce the role of the OSG's Pedagogical Development Unit	When delivered, analyse the IAS assessment of the relation between the PDU and the inspectorate.
2.2	Tighter parliamentary scrutiny and control , and improved communication	OSG to seek for improvement of the communication policy by exploring internal resources. EC to promote participation of the ES in different WGs of the DG EAC.
2.4	Performance appraisals , and training and development plans for all management staff .	BoG to reactivate the currently inactive 'Revision Profile Directors' WG to review the <i>Implementing Regulations for the Appointment and evaluation of Directors and Deputy Directors</i> , with particular focus on the revision of the selection procedure and a potential simplification of

		<p>the evaluation procedure and the consideration of more frequent evaluations.</p> <p>Moreover, the BoG to mandate the same WG to establish an evaluation procedure for members of the managerial staff of the OSG.</p> <p>Concrete proposals are to be submitted in April 2025.</p>
2.5	Additional middle management posts	The BoG to mandate the 'Internal Structures' WG to review the management structure in the schools and to provide the BoG with an analysis and proposals by April 2025 at the latest.
2.7	Annual review of the enrolment policy and school fees	The BoG to mandate the 'School Fees WG' to review the school fees for category 2 and category 3 pupils and to provide an analysis and concrete proposals by April 2025 at the latest.
2.8.	Ambitious and regularly updated ESS mobility plan (transportation) at all levels to make school transportation more efficient, more affordable, more accessible and greener. (22)	BoG to mandate the 'Joint (Seconded teachers and LRT) WG' and AAS WG to create a green mobility package for all categories of staff, including AAS, and to provide the BoG with concrete proposals by April 2025 at the latest.
2.11	Annual ESS report to Parliament by the OSG and the BoG	<p>The SG to present to the EP, after consultation of the BoG, a report on the follow-up to the EP Report in May 2024.</p> <p>OSG to share the Global Annual Activity Report of the ESS and the Annual Activity Report of the OSG with the EP and the European Council.</p>
3.1	Primary and secondary EU legislation to the ESS. Competences of the Complaints Board vis-à-vis national courts.	The BoG to revitalise and mandate the 'Legal Protection WG', to review the competences of the Complaints Board and to provide an analysis and potential proposals to the BoG in April 2025 at the latest.
3.2	Independent ombudsperson	BoG to mandate the 'Legal Protection WG' to analyse this EP recommendation.
3.3	Locally recruited teachers' contractual and working conditions	The BoG to mandate the 'LRT WG' to analyse the possibility and provide proposals by April 2025 concerning the following issues:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of relevant job experience of LRT • Further improvement of job security of LRT • Further extension of the concept of protected teaching functions
3.7	Resolution of teacher shortages a. competitive remuneration b. more equal salaries (N/P and Secondary) c. clarity on and stability of employment d. CPD strategy	The BoG to mandate the Joint (Seconded Teachers and LRT) WG to provide concrete proposals by April 2025 concerning the discrepancy of salaries between the nursery/primary and the secondary cycle and to review the salaries of Educational Advisors at the same time.
MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS		
1.5	Coherent, and systematic inclusion policy across the ESS	OSG to put in place an assessment of the implementation carried out by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNE).
1.8	Open the ESS to more categories of students by the full potential of the AES .	EC (and OSG) to investigate the possibility to improve the stability of small language sections by extending the category of students via bilateral agreements with the delegations.
1.10	Strengthen educational and pedagogical standards by the review of quality assurance . Reinforce the role of the OSG's Pedagogical Development Unit	Based on the IAS Report expected for 2025, seek for strengthening the Inspectorate's capacity by recruiting seconded experts in the PDU.
2.1	In-depth review of the governance and management structures across the ESS	OSG to internally review the current structures, notably the organisation and follow-up of the Administrative bodies (i.e. Pedagogical meetings, BC and BoG) and to seek for improvements in efficiency.
LONG-TERM ACTIONS		
1.5	Coherent, and systematic inclusion policy across the ESS	OSG and Inspectors to put in place a regular periodical evaluation of the Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education (every 5 year).
2.17	Alternative governance models	The opportunity of launching an external evaluation of the system and the possible review of the legal framework of the European Schools will be thoroughly evaluated
NON-DEFINED		
1.12	Inclusion of vocational education	

Annex 1 Task Force and Working Groups (active and non-active) with a new mandate

Ref ¹¹ .	Mandate	Working Group	Status	Unit in charge	Deadline
1.2 (2, 36)	Create a document entitled <i>Mission and Vision of the European Schools</i> , outlining the principles, values, characteristics, functions and objectives of the system in the coming 20-25 years. Specify European Education as a brand fit for the requirements of 21st century as well as a model for high-quality multilingual and multicultural education that can be followed and adapted by other systems in Europe and beyond.	Task Force	New	CAU	2024 Dec
1.8 (21, 36)	Work out proposals on (a) widening the scope of QA within the context of the AES Audits as well as (b) enhanced collaboration between traditional and accredited European Schools coordinated the OSG and the BoG. The concrete proposals are to be presented to the BoG in April 2024 and the BoG in December 2024 respectively.	AES Working Group	Active	CAU	2024 April 2024 Dec
1.9	The Pedagogical Reform WG to examine the question of greater degree of autonomy to schools and teachers by April 2025	Pedagogical Reform WG	Active	PDU	2025 April
2.4 (10)	(a) Review the <i>Implementing Regulations for the Appointment and evaluation of Directors and Deputy Directors</i> , with particular focus on the revision of the selection procedure, a potential	Revision Profile Directors WG (to be reactivated and mandated)	non-active	HR	2025 April

¹¹ The first number in this column refers to the number of the actions as presented in the document *Action Plan: Reflection on the Future of the European Schools' System* (Ref.: 2024-01-D-30-en-2). The number(s) in brackets refer to the numbers of the points in the *Report on the system of European Schools: state of play, challenges and perspectives* (EP Report, CULT Committee).

	<p>simplification of the evaluation procedure and the consideration of more frequent evaluations.</p> <p>(b) Establish an evaluation procedure for members of the managerial staff of the OSG.</p>				
2.5 (19)	Review the management structure in the schools and to provide an analysis and proposals regarding the creation of additional middle management posts in the area of pedagogical development focusing on high-quality teaching methodologies and the implementation of the curricula at schools.	Internal Structures WG	Non-Active	DSG	2025 April
2.7 (21)	Review the school fees for category 2 and category 3 pupils and provide an analysis and concrete proposals in this area.	School Fees WG	Active	Accounting	2025 April
2.8. (22)	Create a green mobility package for all categories of staff, including AAS, and provide concrete proposals.	Joint WG (Seconded teachers and LRT) and AAS WG	Active	HR	2025 April
3.1 (12)	Review the competences of the Complaints Board vis-à-vis national courts and provide an analysis and potential proposals to revise the current situation if necessary.	Legal Protection WG (to be reactivated and mandated)	Non-active	CAU	2025 April
3.2 (11)	Analyse the possibility and create concrete proposals with regard to the appointment of an independent ombudsperson to deal with complaints about maladministration and mediate in case of conflicts. (11)	Legal Protection WG (to be reactivated and mandated)	Non-active	CAU	2025 April
3.3 (12)	<p>Analyse the possibility and provide proposals by April 2025 concerning the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of relevant job experience of LRT • Further improvement of job security of LRT 	LRT WG	Active	HR	2025 April

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further extension of the concept of protected teaching functions 				
3.7 (17, 24)	<p>Analyse the possibility and provide concrete proposals concerning the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrepancy of salaries between the nursery/primary cycle and the secondary cycle; • to review the salaries of Educational Advisors at the same time. 	Joint WG (Seconded teachers and LRT)	Active	HR	2025 April

ANNEX 2 - IDENTIFICATION SHEET AND REPORT OF WORKING GROUPS

TITLE OF THE GROUP: Task Force ‘Mission and Vision of the European Schools’

ID CODE:

TYPE*:

Composition of the group	Names/Stakeholder represented	Country/School
Chair(s)	Secretary-General of the European Schools Executive Coordinator (vice-chair)	OSG
Members		
Non-enlarged	Head of Delegation (Ireland – Presidency 2022/23) Head of Delegation (Italy - Presidency 2023/24) Head of Delegation (Cyprus – Presidency 2024/25) Head of Delegation (Latvia – Presidency 2025/26) 1 Representative of the European Commission 1 Director (ES) 1 Director (AES) 1 Inspector of the Primary cycle 1 Inspector of the Secondary cycle	To be nominated
Enlarged	In addition to non-enlarged: 1 Member of ISTC 1 Member of CoSUP 1 Member of Interparents	To be nominated
<p>MANDATE GIVEN BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS on 10-12 April 2024 <i>Doc: 2024-01-D-30-en: Action Plan: Reflection on the Future of the European Schools’ System (Follow-up to the Report of the European Parliament)</i></p> <p>In accordance with Action 1.2 of the Action Plan, the Board of Governors set up and mandated a Task Force with creating of the document <i>Mission and Vision of the European Schools System</i>, outlining its principles, values, characteristics, functions and other pertinent aspects.</p> <p>The Action Plan suggests the following aspects to be included in the Mission and Vision document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full, high-quality educational experience, encompassing mother tongue tuition, SWALS education, foreign language teaching (Action Plan 1.6) 		

- ESS teachers' role and prospects both in national systems (Action Plan 1.4) and within the system (e.g. CPD strategy) (Action Plan 3.7)
- Educational Support and Inclusive Education (Action Plan 1.5)
- Environmental learning, digital education European dimension, citizenship education, entrepreneurship and soft skills, religious and ethical education (Action Plan 1.7)
- Quality Assurance (Action Plan 1.8)
- Role of Accredited European Schools (Action Plan 1.8)
- Maintaining a good balance between central requirements and flexibility in local application within the schools' autonomy (Action Plan 1.9)
- Providing a safe learning environment (Action Plan 2.9)
- Cost-sharing agreement (Action Plan 2.14)
- define the mission and perspectives of the ESS in the context of the European Education Area (EEA) (Action Plan 1.3)

To note, the list above does not preclude the possibility of identifying other aspects worthy of inclusion in the final version.

TIMEFRAME OF THE WORK:

4 meetings over two school years (2023-2024 and 2024-2025), out of which:

- 1 online meeting (kick-off) for the Non-Enlarged Group in May 2024
- 1 online meeting for the Enlarged Group in June 2024
- 1 online meeting for the Enlarged Group in September 2024
- 1 online meeting for the Enlarged Group between the Budgetary Committee in November and the Board of Governors in December 2024

The final version of the document to be presented to the Board of Governors in December 2024

BUDGET for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025:

- 4 online meetings: € 0

Number of meetings scheduled: 4 online

Budgeting: No budgetary impact.