# The future financing of the European Schools

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on its own-initiative report by Herbert BOSCH (PES, Austria) on the financing of the European schools. Parliament felt that the globalisation of the world economy and the high intrinsic value of the European baccalaureate justified the wider spread of the European baccalaureate. The 'raison d'étre' of the existing European Schools should be reconsidered as some of the smaller schools have a very limited number of pupils who are children of staff of a European body (between 5 and 11%). The importance of the European Schools for the 'proper functioning of the European Institutions' must now be the subject of an independent evaluation. The current 'raison d'étre' should be expanded to take into account the added European value of the schools. Parliament went on to invite local, regional or national authorities that appreciate having a European School to explore additional ways of practical and financial cooperation and participation. It also insisted on more independence for each of the European Schools, which should allow them to undertake fund-raising activities, such as providing language courses, and which should improve the integration of the schools in the regions in which they are operating. Accordingly, Parliament favoured a budget structure that makes funding available per school according to agreed and objective criteria. It noted that the budgetary authority of the European Communities decides on the Communities' contributions under the budget procedure. The Commission is asked to present by 1 March 2003 a legislative proposal setting out ways to bring to an end the present discrepancy between the legislative provisions, that are intergovernmental in nature, and the budgetary provisions, which are, in part, supranational (Community) in nature. The Commission is also asked to put forward a proposal that foresees that the subsidy paid to the European schools out of the Community budget should become a lump sum subsidy instead of a balancing subsidy. The Board of Governors of the European Schools, together with the Commission, is asked for a report with proposals on: - how the European baccalaureate can be offered, without being dependent on the existing European Schools, in those Member States which may wish to do so; - how to achieve methods of cooperation between the existing European schools and regional primary and secondary schools, or on other organisational solutions; - how the existing European schools and future European schools (which might become necessary following the creation of new Union agencies, particularly with regards to enlargement) may be financed in the future, paying particular attention to the possibility of increased co-financing by third parties for all European Schools, the possibility of contributions through fund-raising and the adjustment of tuition fees; - the impact of enlargement on the future development and financing of the European Schools; The Commission is asked to issue a call for tenders for an independent and objective evaluation of the European Schools system, to cover: - their importance for the recruitment of staff to the European Institutions, - the strengths, weaknesses and 'added value' of the EuropeanBaccalaureate as an education for pupils who go on to study in higher education, for pupils who do not proceed to higher education, and in comparison with the International Baccalaureate. The Board of Governors is also asked to present to the budgetary authority a financial and budgetary proposal for the creation of the new European Schools in Alicante and Frankfurt. The Board should in future seek the prior approval of the budgetary authority for decisions it intends to take that have considerable multi-annual implications for the budget of the Union. Finally, the Board of Governors is asked to present to the budgetary authority a proposal to bring the tuition fee which is requested from the parents of the pupils, more into line with the real cost per pupil. The tuition fee should be at least equal to the allowance which EU officials receive for children in full-time education. On the educational aspects, Parliament felt that nursery and primary school classes, taught by a single qualified teacher should not be larger than 30 pupil equivalents. Further, a coefficient should be developed in respect of children with special educational needs and of pupils whose mother tongue is different from the language in which they receive most of their instruction. This coefficient should be applied when class sizes are calculated. The Board must actively explore the suitability of qualifications other than the European Baccalaureate, for which pupils with certified special educational needs might study. Parliament made additional recommendations on the Board's administrative procedures in the interests of transparency.