Basic information

2011/2036(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
European Schools' system **Subject** 4.40.03 Primary and secondary school, European Schools, early childhood	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CULT Culture and Education	CAVADA Jean-Marie (PPE)	01/12/2010
	Shadow rapporteur ROTH NEVEĎALOVÁ Katarína (S&D) TAKKULA Hannu (ALDE) BENARAB-ATTOU Malika (Verts/ALE) MCCLARKIN Emma (ECR) VERGIAT Marie-Christine (GUE/NGL)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG Budgets	ABAD Damien (PPE)	16/02/2011
JURI Legal Affairs	WIKSTRÖM Cecilia (ALDE)	26/01/2011

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	VASSILIOU Androulla

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
19/11/2010	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2010)0595	Summary

17/02/2011	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
14/07/2011	Vote in committee		Summary
01/08/2011	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0293/2011	
26/09/2011	Debate in Parliament		
27/09/2011	Decision by Parliament	T7-0402/2011	Summary
27/09/2011	Results of vote in Parliament		
27/09/2011	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2011/2036(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/7/05337

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE464.749	04/05/2011	
Committee opinion	BUDG	PE462.842	16/06/2011	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE464.750	16/06/2011	
Committee opinion	JURI	PE462.784	22/06/2011	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0293/2011	01/08/2011	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0402/2011	27/09/2011	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2010)0595	19/11/2010	Summary

European Schools' system

2011/2036(INI) - 19/11/2010 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present the Commission’s report on the Europeaqn Schools’ system.

CONTENT: in its report, the Commission notes that 2009 was a year of progress in some fields but also confirmation that some structural issues still need to be addressed within the system. The process of reform that was launched by European Parliament resolutions in 2002 and 2005 came to a close in April 2009 at the Board of Governors' meeting in Stockholm. Major achievements include the following:

- the opening up of the system of the European Schools through the possibility of accreditation of national schools, in order to enable the latter to deliver the European curriculum and possibly also the European Baccalaureate. The European curriculum is taught in Parme, Dunshauglin, Heraklion, Helsinki, Strasbourg and Manosque. A school in Bad Vilbel is currently going through the process of accreditation. In addition, the European School in Culham is in the process of preparing a transition with the aim to apply for accreditation which will be a valuable experience for the system of the European Schools. The reform includes the possibility for accredited schools to sign an agreement in order to receive a financial contribution from the EU budget in relation to the number of children of EU staff attending the school in question;
- in the context of opening up of the European Schools system to the accredited schools, the baccalaureate working group has submitted some proposals to simplify the organisation of the examination, to cut costs, to review the examination's content, without jeopardising the certificate's quality and while keeping in mind the current requirements of universities and other higher education institutions;
- efforts to render the system more efficient in terms of governance also resulted in reforms on central and local level with more autonomy for local schools within the boundaries of the existing rules and financial regulations. For each school, a road map setting out the objectives (annual school plan) and resources (draft budget) and also the control mechanisms and reporting obligations are tools to be used in the new framework;
- the European Schools continued their efforts to integrate children with special education needs, where necessary with an adapted programme of studies and appropriate human resources. During the school year 2008/09, there were 457 pupils under a SEN convention, meaning an increase of 10.1% compared to the previous year. The Commission has continued to make the necessary financial resources available by agreeing the transfer of credits which allow the adjustment of credits to real costs supported during the year. The SEN executed budget increased from EUR 3 426 685 in 2008 to EUR 4 441.142 in 2009. Nevertheless, there is concern about this continuing increase and the report mentions the necessity to analyse in depth the SEN criteria in order to focus resources optimally.

The overall economic situation obviously had an impact on the schools' finances. The overall number of pupils increased by 3.15 % from 21.649 to 22.331 from 2008 to 2009. The budgetary execution figures show a decrease in the share borne by Member States, in the share accounted for by revenue from contracts with private entities and for the revenue from school fees and also in the share of other sources (mainly bank interests). Consequently, there is an increase in the share paid from the EU contribution:

The evolution of the budgetary demands observed for the European Schools combined with the current economic situation has led the Commission to request a revision of certain expenses in the system of the European Schools A more cost efficient approach and fairer distribution of the financial burden is necessary. The future budgetary planning needs to be kept under control and the Commission made the approval of the 2011 budget conditional on a certain number of revisions of expenses.

In addition, It is clear that some systemic problems persisted and even became more serious during the year 2009:

- the unresolved problem of a constant lack of seconded teachers is continuing to put undue strain on the EU financial contribution to the system. The cost of paying for locally recruited teachers in order to make up for the short-fall still falls heavily on the Commission. In 2009, this represented a cost of EUR 2.1 million. Efforts in the area of cost-sharing were difficult to achieve and already signs are evident that more needs to be done in this field combined with cost-cutting efforts;
- Member States' delays or non provision of sufficient infrastructure in the locations of the overpopulated schools continued to affect the quality of life for students and parents. It also had major implications on enrolment policies. The infrastructure situation is going to be very worrying in the coming years in several locations. The Brussels and Luxembourg schools welcome more than 60 % of the overall pupils of the system and both locations will suffer in the coming years before permanent solutions will be provided in 2012 by the host countries responsible.

European Schools' system

2011/2036(INI) - 27/09/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the European Schools' system.

The resolution recalls that the preamble to the 1994 Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools states that the European Schools system is ‘sui generis’ and constitutes a form of cooperation between the Member States and between them and the European Communities while fully acknowledging the Member States' responsibility for the content of teaching and the organisation of their educational system, and for their cultural and linguistic diversity.

Parliament considers that the current intergovernmental legal status of the European Schools has reached its limits and requires profound change and the Commission report on the European Schools' system in 2009 pointed to persisting and worsening systemic problems, such as the lack of seconded teachers or delays in, or non-provision of, sufficient infrastructure at the schools' locations, which have a direct effect on the quality of education, enrolment policies, the quality of life of students, parents and teachers and financial aspects of the functioning of the Schools. The main aim of the 2009 reform of the European Schools was to open them up to a wider and more diverse intake, while at the same time ensuring the system's long-term viability.

The resolution makes a number of recommendations which may be summarised as follows:

Organisation and spread of the European baccalaureate system: Parliament considers that the European Schools should become an example of one of the best possible forms of schooling in Europe, based on the dissemination of European culture, values and languages, and European integration. It

also considers that the European Schools should also function as promoters of multiculturalism and multilingualism, and as models for the protection and promotion of languages of lower international usage. Members believe that t**he small number of pupils requiring education in a given language should not lead to education in that particular language being discontinued**, bearing in mind that mother-tongue education constitutes the founding principle of the European Schools. The resolution draws attention to the need to make the European Schools' syllabus more compatible with national education systems in order to facilitate the swift reintegration of pupils returning to their countries of origin.

Members take the view that the **budgetary restrictions** that the Schools will have to accept must be accompanied by a real increase in their management autonomy – by, for example, allowing the schools to find other funding – and in the resources for exercising that autonomy. A greater degree of budgetary autonomy may be an effective way of improving the management of the resources allocated to them, following an assessment by the Commission on this issue.

Legal base of the system: the resolution emphasises that the European Schools are currently in a **legal limbo**, which manifests itself in the unclear legal and jurisdictional status of acts adopted by the Schools' bodies, insufficient possibilities to challenge those acts before national courts, no possibility of recourse to the European Ombudsman. The current intergovernmental legal status of the European Schools has reached its limits and requires **profound change**. This change should be of such a nature as to allow Union action to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States, without superseding their competence. Parliament stresses the need to give the European Schools the foundation of an **adequate legal base**, within the EU's area of competence. It considers that the European Schools should be brought under the umbrella of the Union and considers that an appropriate legal basis in this regard could be Article 165 TFEU.

Opening up the system: Parliament invites the Member States to pursue collective consideration of how best to realise the aim of opening up the system. It also calls on the Central Enrolment Authority to establish an **exchange forum for all parents** who have not secured a place for their children in their school of choice, so that they can be transferred to the desired school by means of exchanges with other pupils.

Automatic recognition of the European baccalaureate: students who hold the European baccalaureate can apply to any university in the EU, with the same rights as nationals of the country in question who hold equivalent qualifications. Members urge the Member States to ensure that the relevant provisions are complied with, so that the European baccalaureate is automatically recognised in all Member States.

Parliament urges the Member States to ensure that all their universities and higher education institutions apply the same requirements when recognising the education of students from European Schools as for students from national schools and that these students receive the same credits for their education, in order to have equal chances and opportunities when applying for higher education.

On a more technical level, Parliament highlights two important aspects of European Schools which may be summarised as follows:

(1) Budgetary aspects: it calls on the European Union to define its budget contribution so that these principles are respected, and so that there is adequate provision for students with special educational needs (SEN) or other learning difficulties which require specific support, and to provide a detailed breakdown of the funds allocated for students with SEN in order to ensure optimal use of those funds. Members invite the Commission, before deciding on any budgetary changes, in cooperation with the Schools and parent/teacher associations, to draw up an impact assessment of the various options for rationalisation of the system, including examining the educational aspects. They emphasise that the Union's involvement in the European Schools is disproportionately little compared to the financial contribution from its budget and state that the proposed cuts in the budgets of the European Schools constitute a serious threat to the quality of education and the proper functioning of the European Schools, and therefore **oppose any budgetary cuts**. Noting that the 2012 draft budget provides for a 1.7% increase in funding for the European Schools, at a time when budgetary difficulties have led the Commission to propose a freeze on its own administrative expenditure and a 1.3% increase in administrative expenditure for the European institutions generally, Parliament undertakes to scrutinise the appropriations on the budget lines in question in order for all budgetary needs to be met. According to the Parliament, the European Schools must be financed on a sound and adequate basis so that the commitments made in the Convention and in the Staff Regulations of Officials and Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union can be fulfilled and the quality of the education provided. The resolution emphasises the long-term importance of making the European Union’s financial contribution more transparent and calls on the Commission to submit to it an update on implementation of the 2009 reform and on the financing requirements for the coming years, especially in respect of the buildings policy.

(2) Educational aspects: Parliament wishes to see general use of the working languages for teaching all non-fundamental subjects, without this being detrimental to those whose mother tongue is not one of working languages. It stresses the need for an external evaluation of the European Schools’ syllabuses and that the recruitment of local staff meets the excellence criteria. The resolution notes an abnormally high failure rate in the French language section. The Board of Governors is called upon to examine the educational and financial causes and consequences of this malfunction, of the failure rate in general and of the on-going high rates of children repeating a year. Members reaffirm that provision for students with special educational needs must continue to be a priority, particularly as the European Schools still offer only one type of school-leaving certificate.