Procedure file

Basic information

INI - Own-initiative procedure 2022/2149(INI)	Procedure completed
The System of European Schools: State of play, Challenges and Perspectives Subject 4.40.03 Primary and secondary school, European Schools, early childhood	

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	CULT Culture and Education		10/10/2022
		CICUREL Ilana	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		POLLÁK Peter	
		NEGRESCU Victor	
		FRANZ Romeo	
		KRUK Elżbieta	
		GRISET Catherine	
		MICHELS Martina	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	SCHINAS Margaritis	

Key events

20/10/2022	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/05/2023	Vote in committee		
01/06/2023	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0205/2023	Summary

12/09/2023	Results of vote in Parliament		
12/09/2023	Decision by Parliament	T9-0306/2023	Summary
12/09/2023	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2022/2149(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/9/10199

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE742.413	17/03/2023	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE746.743	18/04/2023	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0205/2023	01/06/2023	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0306/2023	12/09/2023	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2024)110	22/03/2024	EC	

The System of European Schools: State of play, Challenges and Perspectives

The Committee on Culture and Education has adopted an own-initiative report by Ilana CICUREL (Renew, FR) on the system of European Schools: state of play, challenges and perspectives.

State of play and vision

Members pointed out that the unique European School System (ESS) has demonstrated its strengths and qualities since its creation in the 1950s, as shown, for example, by the recognition of the European Baccalaureate in all Member States and the steady growth in the number of accredited European Schools (AES). However, serious governance, management and financing difficulties persist, hampering the systems potential with negative consequences for the entire school community. These difficulties touch upon legal issues, resources, infrastructures, staff recruitment and elements of educational and pedagogical quality, thereby underscoring a profound need for reform.

The report stressed the need for a critical, in-depth assessment of all aspects of the ESS, and for reform to future-proof the system, expand its outreach activities and ensure that it serves as a model for the exchange of good practices across educational systems.

Members called on the European Schools Board of Governors (BoG) to update the mission, principles and objectives of the ESS in the form of a new ESS Charter. They called on the Commission to play a more active coordinating role, in particular to forge links between the EES and the European Education Area (EEA). They would like to see greater accountability and transparency, more parliamentary scrutiny and scrutiny, and better communication so that the EES and the European Baccalaureate are more visible and better understood at all levels.

Governance, management and legal issues

The report called on the Commission to carry out, before the end of 2024, a thorough review of the governance and management structures of the EES as a whole and of each institution in particular. It asked that this review examine the missions, responsibilities and structures in place at all levels, assess the independence of functions and possible conflicts of interest, and identify the regulatory issues that hamper the EES.

Members stressed the need to streamline the Board of Governors' decision-making process and increase its flexibility. They called for all management staff to have clear responsibilities, transparent decision-making, performance reviews every two years and training and development plans. Parliament should be able to monitor reforms and progress towards targets.

The Board of Governors is invited to: (i) assess compliance with health, safety and security standards in the schools; (ii) ensure that the contractual and working conditions of locally recruited teachers comply with EU and national employment legislation; (iii) 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; (iv) put in place an independent ombudsperson to address complaints about maladministration and mediate in conflicts; and (v) develop a code of good administrative conduct for school management at all levels.

The report urged the Member States to meet their obligations vis-à-vis the ESS in full, particularly with regard to the secondment of qualified teachers and other educational staff and the provision of adequate infrastructure and called for a binding system of direct financial contributions to ensure greater flexibility and security for both the ESS and the Member States.

The Board of Governors is called upon to urgently address the ongoing teacher shortages and to provide a stable and fair employment situation for all by retain staff and reducing turnover, thereby preventing the brain drain. In this regard, Members called for additional resources and a strengthened and fair employment package for seconded and locally recruited staff alike, with competitive remuneration, more equal salaries for nursery, primary and secondary teachers, clarity about employment status and stability. They called for teachers and schools to be given a greater degree of autonomy and for the creation of new middle management posts focusing on quality teaching methods and programmes in schools.

Quality of education and teaching

Members advocated a series of measures to improve educational and teaching standards. For instance, they called on the Board of Governors and the Secretary-General's Office to develop a strategy for continuous professional development and an induction programme for teachers and other education staff across the EES by the end of 2024.

The report urged schools to take advantage of the opportunities offered by personalised learning. It called on the Board of Governors to implement a coherent, uniform and systematic inclusion policy across the EES. It called on the Board of Governors and the Secretary-General's Office to promote a safe learning environment in which no form of violence is permitted and to step up the fight against harassment and cyber-bullying in the EES.

Members stressed that it is essential to offer all pupils a full and high-quality educational experience, particularly in their mother tongue and for students without a language section. They called on the Boards of Governors to periodically review the teaching of a second and third language. They also called for current curricula to be updated to emphasise the European dimension.

Outlook

Lastly, Members asked for the financial contributions from the EU to the ESS to feature as a separate budget line in future EU budgets. They want the ESS to 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. They expressed the wish for the European Parliament to be represented on the Board of Governors.

The System of European Schools: State of play, Challenges and Perspectives

The European Parliament adopted by 515 votes to 74, with 44 abstentions, a resolution on the system of European Schools: state of play, challenges and perspectives.

State of affairs and vision

The European Schools System (ESS) is a unique system that has demonstrated its strengths and qualities since its creation in the 1950s, as shown, for example, by the recognition of the European Baccalaureate in all Member States and the continuous growth in the number of Accredited European Schools (AES).

Parliament stressed the need for a critical, in-depth assessment of all aspects of the ESS, and for reform to future-proof the system, expand its outreach activities and ensure that it serves as a model for the exchange of good practices across educational systems. It called on the European Schools Board of Governors (BoG) to update the mission, principles and objectives of the ESS in the form of a new ESS Charter to be introduced by the end of 2024.

The Commission is called on to:

- assess the role of the ESS in the establishment of the EEA, including with regard to language learning and a strong European dimension of learning, and in the automatic mutual recognition of diplomas across the EU, based on the established model of the European Baccalaureate;

- play a more integrated and active role, in particular in terms of interlinking the ESS and the EEA.

Parliament called 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. A closer relationship between the ESS and local, regional and national educational ecosystems is called for.

Governance, management and legal issues

Parliament called on the Commission to carry out, before the end of 2024, a thorough review of the governance and management structures of the EES as a whole and of each institution in particular. It asked that this review examine the missions, responsibilities and structures in place at all levels, assess the independence of functions and possible conflicts of interest, and identify the regulatory issues that hamper the EES.

Members stressed the need to streamline the Board of Governors' decision-making process and increase its flexibility. They called for all management staff to have clear responsibilities, transparent decision-making, performance reviews every two years and training and development plans.

The Board of Governors is invited to: (i) assess compliance with health, safety and security standards in the schools; (ii) ensure that the contractual and working conditions of locally recruited teachers comply with EU and national employment legislation; (iii) 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; (iv) put in place an independent ombudsperson to address complaints about maladministration and mediate in conflicts; and (v) develop a code of good administrative conduct for school management at all levels.

Resources, infrastructure and staff

Parliament urged the Member States to meet their obligations vis-à-vis the ESS in full, particularly with regard to the secondment of qualified teachers and other educational staff and the provision of adequate infrastructure and called for a binding system of direct financial

contributions to ensure greater flexibility and security for both the ESS and the Member States.

The Board of Governors is called upon to urgently address the ongoing teacher shortages and to provide a stable and fair employment situation for all by retain staff and reducing turnover, thereby preventing the brain drain. In this regard, Members called for additional resources and a strengthened and fair employment package for seconded and locally recruited staff alike, with competitive remuneration, more equal salaries for nursery, primary and secondary teachers, clarity about employment status and stability, a system of continuous professional development and further career prospects in and beyond the ESS. They called for an urgent annual review of the enrolment policy and school fees.

Quality of education and teaching

Members advocated a series of measures to strengthen educational and pedagogical standards, for instance, by: (i) creating a task force, with relevant pedagogical expertise; (ii) undertaking open, transparent and regular consultations with stakeholders; (iii) introducing an enhanced and accountable inspection regime, and (iv) ensuring ESS participation in EU programmes and initiatives such as the Erasmus+ Teacher Academies and the EEA.

The Board of Governors is invited to:

- develop a continuing professional development strategy and induction programme for teachers and other education staff across the EES by the end of 2024;

- foster a safe learning environment in which no form of violence is allowed and to strengthen the fight against bullying and cyber-bulling;

- reinforce existing frameworks and implement a coherent, uniform and systematic inclusion policy across the ESS that provides quality inclusive education, avoids exclusion due to disabilities, ensures reasonable accommodation, adapts teacher-to-students ratios, uses a flexible curriculum, considerably increases the number of qualified educational and psychological support staff and provides orientation and mentoring services;

- boost environmental learning and digital education in the ESS.

Members stressed that it is essential to offer all pupils a full and high-quality educational experience, particularly in their mother tongue and for students without a language section. They called on the Boards of Governors to periodically review the teaching of a second and third language.

Outlook

Parliament called for the financial contributions from the EU to the ESS to feature as a separate budget line in future EU budgets. It wants the ESS to 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. They expressed the wish for the European Parliament to be represented on the Board of Governors.

Transparency

CICUREL Ilana	Rapporteur	CULT	15/03/2023	Deputy secretary general of the European school system
CICUREL Ilana	Rapporteur	CULT	02/03/2023	European schools Inter-school Teaching Committee Interparents CoSup Board of governors
CICUREL Ilana	Rapporteur	CULT	15/02/2023	Irish Presidency board of Inspectors
CICUREL Ilana	Rapporteur	CULT	01/02/2023	Representatives of the European schools (Inter-School Teaching Committee)
CICUREL Ilana	Rapporteur	CULT	25/01/2023	European Schools, Luxembourg Accredited european schools - Aix-marseille, France and Helsinki, Finland
CICUREL Ilana	Rapporteur	CULT	11/01/2023	European School Brussels II European School Luxembourg I European School III
CICUREL Ilana	Rapporteur	CULT	10/01/2023	The presidents of the Parent's and Student's associations of the European Schools CoSup Interparents
CICUREL Ilana	Rapporteur	CULT	05/12/2022	Secretary-General of the European Schools