



24 September 2007

**MEMORANDUM  
FOR THE ATTENTION OF CAF AND THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**Re:**

**European Schooling in Strasbourg – General Interest File (2007-D-78-en-1) and  
Complementary proposals made by ESK Headmaster Tom Hoyem**

**Introduction**

*Etoile Education*, the parents' association in Strasbourg for families who are sending or would wish to send their children to a European School, welcomes the recent statement on 7 September 2007 of Jean-Pierre Jouyet, Secretary of State for European Affairs, announcing the opening of a European School in Strasbourg.

We pay tribute to the French authorities for having invited representatives of our association to a meeting with senior government officials at the *Rectorat* in Strasbourg on 10 September to learn first-hand of the plans outlined in the General Interest File submitted to the Board of Governors. The meeting was very fruitful and we were assured that our association would be consulted throughout the process towards establishing European Schooling ("ES") in Strasbourg.

Our association held numerous meetings with decision-makers at all levels during the period preceding the announcement by Minister Jouyet. Since the French Government's announcement, *Etoile Education* has been flooded by requests for information from parents eager to find out more about the new type of schooling. In response, we organised, on 21 September, an information meeting whose attendance surpassed all expectations. Among those taking part in the debate were *Sénateur* Roland Ries and Strasbourg Deputy Mayor Pascal Mangin as did various teacher and parent representatives from the "international sections" in the French public schools.

**As to the General Interest File**

We note that the three language sections planned to open for the school year 2008-9 would have the capacity to accommodate approximately 300 pupils in the nursery and primary cycles, with classes of 25, while the secondary's capacity would be 150 pupils.

While it is to be expected that the admission capacity initially projected will increase once adequate separate premises have been allocated for European Schooling (ideally on a separate campus), the initial numbers appear far too limited to meet the demand. In this context we note the assurances given to us on 10 September to the effect that the notion of "entitled pupils" ("*ayants-droits*") would be a wide one, allowing for priority consideration of children from "the international community" in the widest sense of the word. As is also made clear in the General Interest File only 17 per cent of the pupils currently enrolled in a primary-school grade of an "international section" in Strasbourg (155 pupils out of 886)

come from a family linked to European and international organisations (European Parliament, European Ombudsman, Council of Europe, Eurocorps and diplomatic representations).

We fear therefore that in the spring of 2008 – when the interest in European Schooling may have reached a first peak in Strasbourg – many pupils who would no doubt qualify for ES on a different location will risk finding the Strasbourg doors closed simply due to shortage of space. As this could reflect poorly on ES in Strasbourg as well as on ES as a whole we respectfully ask what transitional arrangements might be foreseen by the Board of Governors in order to avoid such a regrettable start. In this vein, might we suggest the following for the Board’s consideration:

1. Those children whose profile would qualify them in principle for admission in Strasbourg (option 1) but who cannot be admitted due to shortage of space in 2008, 2009 and so forth could in the meantime be admitted as category 3 students to ESK (option 2). If the parents have ticked both options, ESK would make the final admission decision after interviewing the child. The application form prepared by the French authorities should make these two transitional options clear.
2. Once the space available for more ES classes in Strasbourg will have grown sufficiently the above children having been admitted to ESK under option 2 would have priority for admission into a Strasbourg class if their parents choose to "repatriate" them.

The above suggestion might be considered together with the ESK Headmaster’s own proposals which likewise offer a transitional solution, whether in Karlsruhe proper or at an annex based in Kehl am Rhein, 10 minutes from Strasbourg (see below).

### **As to the complementary proposals made by the ESK Headmaster**

At our meeting with the French Government representatives on 10 September we expressed our regret that they appeared to have held no consultations with their German counterparts with a view to setting up European schooling of truly symbolic and groundbreaking nature, i.e. by creating jointly financed primary schooling on one side of the Rhine and secondary schooling on the other. We were informed that as the French Ministry had not been formally approached by its German counterpart it was not for the French to take the initiative to contact the German authorities. We regret this overly formal attitude. As surely must have been known to the French authorities a file has been under preparation in Germany (under the stewardship of the ESK Headmaster) for submission to the Board of Governors, seeking permission to create an ESK primary-school annex (hence of Type I) in Kehl, only 10 minutes away from Strasbourg.

At the meeting on 10 September we received assurances that the recruitment sector would extend beyond the Rhine, regardless of the candidate’s nationality. While welcoming this, we continue to insist on the importance of making the new ES an inherent part of the cross-border administrative entity called *Eurodistrict*. Choosing such a course of action – rather than erecting a “Rhine wall” – would truly benefit the image of Strasbourg as the so-called Capital of Europe.

We note that the French Government in the General Interest File is committing itself to seeking collaboration with one or several Type 1 schools. Surely the closest one by far, ESK, should be one of them? For these reasons as well, we fully support the proposals

made by the ESK Headmaster which have the laudable overarching objective of providing advice and assistance to the “start-up” European School in Strasbourg.

## Summary

*Etoile Education* supports the initiative now taken by the French Government and looks forward to remaining fully consulted in the further process.

We also support the ESK Headmaster's complementary proposals which tie in with the already well-advanced idea of providing at least temporary ESK facilities nearer to Strasbourg while European Schooling in that city is progressively being phased in.

Finally, we respectfully submit for the Board's consideration further complementary proposals seeking to offer a satisfactory interim solution in view of the very significant interest we anticipate in European Schooling in Strasbourg and which regretfully we fear will not be met, quite possibly for years to come.

Respectfully yours,

Michel Curien  
President, *Etoile Education*

Annex: Meetings on the subject of European Schooling (Note of 14 June 2007)  
(Eng/Fr)