



ESK ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

29 June 2006

SCHOOL FEES FOR OFFICIALS OF GOVERNMENTAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS OTHER THAN EU

The majority of Etoile Education's members based in the Strasbourg area are currently paying **category II** fees, despite the fact that they work for governmental or intergovernmental organisations (Council of Europe, Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe and Eurocorps), **much like their European Union counterparts, who are considered Category I**. The category II fee hits very hard on military officials and civil servants other than those holding senior-ranking posts. To this burden should be added the significant cost incurred by the pupils' daily travel from the Strasbourg area and, for some, the additional cost of after-school care on ESK premises (MoMi or other activities).

By way of example, the overall cost burden in respect of one child may look as follows:

School fee	11,110 euros
Bus transport	1,965 euros
After-school care (MoMi)	1,000 euros
<u>Total cost</u>	<u>14,075 euros</u>

When parents have more than one child attending ESK this burden is even further increased due to the fact that **no reductions are made for category II siblings**. Generally, efforts are made by schools to make some kind of reduction for siblings so as to enable children of the same family to attend the same school (as ESK does for category III).

Etoile Education first raised these issues in our letter to Mr. Ryan of 23 January 2005. Soon thereafter Mr. Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, requested through Mr. Ryan that the Board of Governors consider the possibility of affording *ad hoc* status to the children of Council of Europe staff (see the attached document SG/Com(2005)917). The item was also touched upon when Mr. Davis met with Mr. Kallas in April 2005 (see the attached document SG/Com(2005)925). In his letter to Mr. Ryan of 22 March 2006 (also attached) Mr. Davis re-iterated his request desire for quick progress on this issue.

It is also the firm view of Etoile Education that the question of the Council of Europe's fee status now needs to be resolved as a matter of urgency, together with the question whether Eurocorps should be afforded similar or other *ad hoc* status.

*Indeed, it is a fact that the 27 EU member states now constitute the majority within the Council of Europe and the two bodies are increasingly co-operating on joint programmes and the like. Council of Europe staff have altogether hundreds of children who would qualify for *ad hoc* status (Ia?). The European Parliament in its resolution 2002/2083 (INI) speaks of "children of staff of (a) "European body" which these potential students certainly are.

ombusman

In sum, even though children of staff at the Council of Europe and Eurocorps *stricto sensu* do not qualify for category I status, these students must nevertheless be considered "closer" to category I than to category III and specific regard should be had to this fact, by way of granting them a particular fee status. In addition, many diplomats working in the Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe represent the government of an EU member state and might therefore arguably be entitled to a specific fee status as well, given that their employer is already contributing to the European Schools through the overall EU budget.

A compromise solution which might be applied at least on an interim basis and for which there is already a precedent is the so-called **category IIIa** which applies to NATO. NATO is one of the so-called co-ordinated organizations, like the Council of Europe. The category IIIa fees would appear to be considerably lower than those applicable to category II children. As there are different category IIIa fees for Nursery, Primary and Secondary school, families with more than one child can be offered the requisite financial flexibility.

At the very least, considering ESK's location near the headquarters of the Council of Europe and Eurocorps, we would request that this school be allowed to design and implement a pilot scheme which would cover not only sibling reductions but also the *ad hoc* status to be afforded to particular client groups based in and around the Capital of Europe, as outlined above.

Leif BERG
President
Etoile Education