



**ETOILE EDUCATION**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2005/6**  
**(adopted at the General Assembly of 19 October 2006)**

**Introduction**

Etoile Education Association, 19, rue Grossmatt, 67800 Hoenheim, was registered on the 31.08.2004 by the *Tribunal d'Instance de Schiltigheim*, Volume 36. Folio n° 37 and published on 9 September 2004 in the newspaper *Ami du Peuple Hebdo*.

The 2005 Annual General Assembly was held on 7 October. It adopted the 2004/5 Annual Report and Financial Report and also authorised the nomination of positions within the Bureau. At the next Bureau meeting, Leif Berg was asked to continue as President and Madelena Grossman as Vice-President. Astrid Sjögren agreed to replace Valerie du Jardin as Vice-President. Ana Gorey would assure the Secretariat for another year. Giovanna Fragapane agreed to take over the Treasury from Mark Gorey. The Bureau were very grateful that Muriel Richardson had agreed to stay on another year, as her experience and contribution to solving issues last year had been much appreciated. Also, Inge Vlamynck, formerly an observer was now on board officially and her presence was also much appreciated, as was that of Stan Nysen. The Bureau indeed reflected the main components of Etoile Education's membership, including permanent representations, Council of Europe and Eurocorps and had a good combination of old and new members, thereby preserving the continuity of the association and adding "new blood". The Bureau also welcomed Stina Lundberg as an observer member.

Therefore the Bureau for 2005/6 was as follows:

**President:** Leif BERG

**Vice-Presidents:** Madelena GROSSMAN and Astrid SJÖGREN

**Secretary:** Ana GOREY

**Treasurer:** Giovanna FRAGAPANE

**Members:** Stan NYSEN, Muriel RICHARDSON, Inge VLAMYNCK

**Membership**

Etoile Education had 30 paying members for the academic year 2005/6 at an annual fee of 20 Euros per family. Membership is open to everyone who wishes to join, but membership is compulsory for anyone being represented by Etoile Education in a contract either with the European School or with the Transport Committee.

## Activities 2005/6

The association continues not only to provide a framework for activities by the Strasbourg group vis-à-vis the school on general issues but also to serve and assist members with practical matters. The Association is becoming noticeably better known both in Strasbourg and within the school.

Etoile Education is now in an even better position to serve not only the interests of our members but also those of the ESK and the European Schools more generally, since being granted a seat on the ESK, Administration Board, following our letter to Mr. Ryan, 20 July 2005. This is a remarkable achievement in such a short time and which due in part, to the excellent working relationship between the Association, the school and its Director, Mr. Hoyem. Even though Etoile Education had already attended meetings in an observer capacity, it is of great importance to our membership as this Board is chaired by the Secretary General of the European School Board, Michael Ryan, accompanied by representatives from the Commission.

It has been a very busy year for Etoile Education as we have been very involved in meetings with or at the school: European Parliament, the Van Dijk consultants conducting a review of ESK for the European Commission; a French school inspector, the Administrative Board, Bike Ride/Festival preparations and also outside the school: meeting on international schooling and bus workshop.

Etoile Education also continues to assist members with practical matters such as:

- **Bank transfers** for various group payments.
- **After school care** – Not all the children have school on Monday or Wednesday afternoons and therefore have to wait for the Bus until 3:30. Supervised care for those children are provided by Etoile Education.
- **Canteen questions** – group payments
- **Test days** – assisting prospective families by raising awareness about the European school system, the European School, Karlsruhe (ESK), as well as specifically facilitating travel to and from the school on test days when future students are able to experience the school first hand.
- **Open Day – 1 April 2006** – The school organised no free bus this year but the school bus operated as usual and many families also drove up independently.

Etoile Education is gaining recognition for its work and is becoming the first port of call for information regarding the European School in Strasbourg. The school continues to host and update our website. The address is [www.eskar.org/etoile/](http://www.eskar.org/etoile/). The site is an extremely useful way of disseminating information about the Strasbourg group and transport modalities and we have received encouraging remarks about how well put together the site is and how professional we are as an association.

Etoile Education has made effort to include the children as part of the association. In view of the fact that the General Assembly was not a good time for them to join in, Etoile Education invited them to the Strasbourg Bowling Alley, Friday afternoon 28 October 2005 after school before half term. All members were paid for by Etoile Education.

**Main activities for 2005/6 have been divided up into four main areas as follows:**

- A – Transport**
- B – Schooling developments**
- C – Raising awareness / Information / Advertising**
- D – Fun and Fundraising activities**

## **A – Transport**

Etoile Education, in cooperation with the Transport Committee of the European School, organised the school bus leaving from Strasbourg on a daily basis. A contract to this effect was signed on Monday 12th June 2005 by Etoile Education with the Transport Committee. A number of new students joined the bus during the school year, bringing the total number to 39 children. The annual bus price was under 2000€ (1,065€ per seat per year) as compared to the previous year's 2,500€.

As was decided at the last General Assembly, additional transport income would be used to cover bus related costs such as loss of foreseen income, after school childcare and other bus related costs and activities. In the event of a shortfall, measures would have to be taken in the next financial year. The Bureau felt that it would not be possible to change the Transport fees in the middle of the academic year.

The times/route remained essentially the same and the *rentrée* was very smooth. The calculation of the annual fee per seat was made on the basis of the transport-cost policy adopted by the Bureau in June 2005, and appended to the transport agreements signed between members and Etoile Education.

### **Transport difficulties**

On 20 December 2005 there were technical problems with the lights on the bus once it reached Strasbourg. Our driver Rolf Weissenrieder continued to pick up the children until the Council of Europe when a few parents agreed at a moment's notice to drive the children to school, especially in view of the fact that many had exams. The school was informed first thing this morning of the Strasbourg group's difficulties in getting to school. Rolf made the necessary reparations and picked up the children from school as usual.

In addition there were two snow days, 17 and 26 January 2006, when the bus was cancelled as the roads were too dangerous. However, several children took the train to school.

### **Bus Behaviour**

A Code of Conduct for the bus Strasbourg-ESK-Strasbourg, approved by the Bureau in June 2005, was distributed to all members who had also been requested to discuss the matter with their children. The problems on the bus were different from last year and although assigned seating has resolved many of the problems, but far from all. Two new bus monitors, Marion Markert and Magnus Fain, were appointed at the beginning of the year. Ms Markert resigned during the first trimester and Mr Fain was eventually assisted by deputy or "helping" monitors drawn by lot (see below).

Disruptive behaviour is dangerous and distracting for the bus driver and could seriously endanger every one on board. As the legal person chartering the bus (in 2005/6 via the school's transport committee and later directly with the operating company) the association has the right to impose preventative measures, for example, banning a student from the bus temporarily when necessary. This issue was discussed at length by our General Assembly in October 2005 which expressed the wish for a framework for mediation and possible sanctions in order to improve the atmosphere on the bus.

Etoile Education recalled that the bus rules (the bus code of conduct) are clear as to possible sanctions and form an integral part of the transport agreement signed by all families:

*"Failure to respect the rules above despite a written warning may lead to temporary exclusion from the bus. In case of a repetitive failure despite a further written warning the passenger may be permanently excluded from the bus. In either case no part of the annual transportation fee shall be refunded."*

In particular, failure to attach the seat belt is not only contrary to our bus rules but may result in a fine of 140 euros and quite possibly even lack of insurance coverage for the injured student.

### **Sanctions**

The sanctions range as follows:

- contact person's meeting or telephone conversation with the guardian(s) with a view to mediation and explaining/translating the bus rules, if necessary
- first warning
- second warning
- suspension from the bus for one day; report to the class teacher and the educational counsellor
- suspension from the bus for a period of time determined according to the gravity of the issue; report to the class teacher and the educational councillor.

If the misconduct is serious (such as jeopardising the driving) the more lenient sanctions need to be used first.

### **Workshop on Bus Security and Conduct**

The 2005 General Assembly, also agreed that a Transport Safety workshop would be an excellent idea. This was organised on the 27 January 2006 immediately following the end of the school day with a pizza lunch provided by Etoile Education. The workshop was conducted by Kristopher Fain, Madelena Grossmann and Astrid Sjögren who split the children into working groups of mixed ages to discuss what they see as the main issues and have them make proposals on how to improve the situation. Then each group presented their issues and suggested actions. The objective was to have the children take ownership of the problems, recognise the consequences of poor behaviour, the role of the bus monitors and be a part of establishing their rights and responsibilities as riders. The Workshop was considered extremely useful and as of next year would be part of the obligations when joining Etoile Education.

As a result of the workshop a booklet with useful information concerning the bus and bus behaviour was to be issued by Etoile Education. The purpose of the book was discussed and the Bureau emphasised the need for it to be aimed at the children, mainly as a source of practical information. Our thanks go to Madelena Grossmann and Astrid Sjögren for their work on the bus book.

In addition, a more security-orientated presentation was organised by the ESK Transport Committee, 5 April 2006, by an expert from the Karlsruhe City Transport Company and translated into French by Lise Meyer. It was compulsory for all primary-school children on our bus (following a decision by Deputy Director Deelen-Geuze) and focused more on the safety aspect of wearing seatbelts etc. The Bureau thanked Lise Meyer for organising this as well as all her efforts for us.

## **Bus Monitors**

At its meeting on 30 November 2005 the Bureau decided to introduce, with effect from 9 January 2006, a daily/weekly report to be filled out by the bus monitor(s). These reports will, if necessary, serve as a basis for possible sanctions should a student fail repeatedly or severely to abide by the bus rules. If the misconduct is deemed to be such that the guardians of the child should be contacted and a sanction possibly imposed, this will be done by the contact persons representing the Bureau. Vice-Presidents Madelena Grossmann and Astrid Sjögren agreed to serve as the first contact persons. Both are, or have been, professional educators.

The monitor's role is limited to checking whether or not the bus rules are being followed and, if not, to ask the student in question to follow them. At the same, he or she will warn the student that failure to comply will be recorded and reported to the contact persons. If this has no impact, the monitor will record the incident and bring it to the attention of the contact persons, who will then contact the parents. The Bureau decided to pay the main bus monitor 1 Euro per day.

Following the workshop suggestions for more than one monitor, there was a short discussion on how the second monitor should be appointed. The Bureau came to the conclusion that it was important to have a main monitor for continuity and stability and that a second "helping monitor" could be nominated using a rota system, giving children 9 years or older the opportunity to realise that it is not easy to be monitor and hopefully help them adjust their behaviour when they are not monitors. The rota for these monitors was established by drawing lots on 17 March 2006 when Leif Berg was on the bus.

## **After-school care**

Christina Frink was the Monday afternoon supervisor and Stephanie Sibbus the Wednesday afternoon supervisor. Etoile Education expresses its gratitude towards the school for facilitating this arrangement. Our thanks also to Inge Vlamynck, who has always given her time to replace a supervisor, if need be. After Easter, Stephanie Sibbus was unable to continue her Wednesday afternoon supervision and we would like to thank Carmen Ezzy for taking over.

## **Special security/border controls due to World Cup**

During the World Cup, Germany would be tightening its boarder controls and the Bureau felt that it would be advisable for the driver to have a copy of all the identity cards/passports of the children on the bus to facilitate any eventual exchanges with the police. It was felt that this should be a requirement for the next year.

## **Relations between Etoile Education and the Transport Committee**

The developing relation between the association and Ms Lise Meyer of the ESK Transport Committee had made it important to clarify the respective roles of the two organs. The Strasbourg bus was not in the same position as other ESK school buses in that our association has taken on a clearly defined responsibility for the bus conduct by drawing up specific rules and appointing our own contact persons dealing with misconduct and grievances relating to the bus trip. Additionally, the length of the trip warranted a less prohibitive approach to eating and drinking on the bus.

On 28 March 2006 the Transport Committee's President, Mr Flemming Merrild, informed our President that the Transport Committee had decided not to renew or extend the contract with Etoile Education. Leif replied by stressing how grateful the association was for the extensive support provided to it over its first two years of activity. He regretted that the Board of the Transport Committee had taken its decision even before the organs had had an opportunity to properly discuss possible ways of cooperating from September 2006 onwards.

The Bureau likewise regretted this manner of terminating the contract and noted that time was already running short in order to secure next year's contract.

### **Transport contract for next academic year 2006/7**

In order to start making preparations for the next academic year, the Bureau discussed the deadline for current members to sign up, down payment, etc., and decided that current members of the association could have until the end of April 2006 to confirm whether or not they wish to maintain the same number of seat(s) also for the following school year. Seat requests would need to be confirmed by 30 May 2006 by cheques (20 euros for the membership 2006/7 and another for 200 euros as a down payment). After that date, seats would be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis.

On 3 May 2006, Rolf Weißenrieder (via Lise Meyer) asked to be paid 560€ a day (the next day he went down to 540€) for the coming school year, whereas during 2005/6 we had been paying 440€ a day. The Bureau noted that the proposal for such a steep rise would increase the cost per seat quite radically for the next year, especially in the absence of any surplus being carried over from the preceding school year. In addition, during the current school year the association, for exceptional reasons, had decided to absorb the "loss" of projected transport income as regards two children who had been withdrawn from ESK as of January 2006.

In an effort to justify to members the projected increase in the bus cost the President later requested quotes from several bus companies in and around Strasbourg. The four quotes obtained ranged from 315 to 470 euros, three of which in the bracket 315-355 euros. In these circumstances the President decided to place the choice of bus company for next school year on the Bureau agenda for 12 June 2006.

As our own association was now taking over the contracting of the bus transport several members of the Bureau visited these companies and made extensive enquiries regarding the company itself, their specific proposal, their buses and regulations. The Bureau then invited members to comment on the quotes received and the minutes from the meetings with representatives of various companies (see Appendix 1). The Bureau considered this issue at three meetings in May and June. Before reaching any decision regarding the bus transport operator for the year 2006/7 the Bureau agreed:

- that there is a compassionate understanding of the effort made by the children to go to the European school in Karlsruhe;
- that the safety and security of the children was the primary factor to be taken into account;
- that bus security and conduct workshops must be obligatory for all students on the bus;
- that the comfort level needed to be high because of the amount of time spent on the bus (up to 4 hours a day for some);
- that every-day reliability was essential, even in the event of a technical breakdown of the bus or illness of the principal driver;
- that a zero-risk scenario is nevertheless impossible to imagine regardless of the chosen bus company.

The Bureau also took into consideration , among other issues, the fact that the Association:

- is still a very young one;
- is non-profit and run by volunteers;
- has no real financial resources or legal services its own;
- that in particular for the above reasons, the association needs to have direct access to the management of the chosen company with a view to ensuring appropriate supervision of the bus service and the bus driver, if necessary so as to hold management accountable for any service not meeting our standards;
- that such an important financial decision had to be made in a pragmatic manner;
- that some of our members have to pay all or part of the transport costs out of their own pocket, which can represent a considerable financial effort for current and prospective families. Even those of us whose transport costs are reimbursed should care about the cost for our employers/inter-governmental bodies and also care about the cost incurring for other members of the association who are not in the same position. That is what associations are about, after all.

The Bureau then carefully considered the five options presented and decided in the end, by a unanimous decision, to accept the offer made by **Striebig**. They would be providing us with a Mercedes-Benz bus equipped with 48 seats, for 345 euros a day.

As in the past, the transport cost per seat for the academic year 2006/7 would be calculated on the basis of the number of children registered for the bus around the beginning of the new school year.

The contract between the Transport Committee/Etoile Education and Mr Weissenrieder came to an end with the end of the school year 2005/6. As a token of gratitude for Rolf's services during two years the students presented him with a voucher for a weekend stay at Hotel Restaurant Tannhof in Schwarzwald. Our thanks to Theo Wels for coming up with this gift idea.

## **B – Schooling developments**

Etoile Education has been following all the developments regarding the European School system very closely, with much interest and, as always, determined to be as involved as possible. It has been an extremely busy year from this point of view and it has been very time and energy consuming to keep up with all the various initiatives, meetings, memos and correspondence which it has entailed. A brief summary is as follows.

### **Administrative Board of the European School Karlsruhe**

Leif Berg attended the Administrative Board for the first time as an official member rather than an observer at the meeting on 10 November 2005. He commented on the fact the forthcoming evaluation of the European School, Karlsruhe as part of the study regarding the “small schools”, as a fantastic opportunity for ESK to shine, not only academically but as a transmitter of European values, a cultural melting pot, a home where children from all nationalities and backgrounds can learn together. The fact that over 40 children travel over 3 hours everyday from Strasbourg to experience this kind of education is proof in itself. In the view of Etoile Education, the European School System is more relevant than ever with the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and UNESCO and other major inter-governmental organisations all recommending multilingual, multicultural European education in all member States.

Leif Berg also asked Mr. Michael Ryan for information regarding the progress of the Board of Governors' Fees Working Group and if they are taking our request to be considered in a special category which Etoile Education raised in their letter to you dated 23 January 2005.

On the 16 February 2006, Ana Gorey represented Etoile Education at the second Administrative Board meeting which specifically discusses the budget. Mr. Hoyem spoke of the Consultants' evaluation and said that it had proved very positive and was a good exercise as it helped them, as a school, to take stock of the situation and look towards the future. He was concerned however, that there might be a tendency to lump all the small schools together regardless of how well individual schools in question might be doing. He felt that radical changes were needed and that it was his duty to come forward with a vision for the future. He presented four main ideas, outlined in the Wirtschaftsplan 2008-2010, regarding the future functioning and financing of the school. Mr. Ryan said that the Board of Governors had already envisaged new forms of financing and welcomed anything going in that direction however, this had to be in line with instructions from the Statutory bodies. The Commission also commented along similar lines more particularly with where the responsibilities would lie should local authorities take more of an active role in the running of the school.

Ana Gorey reminded the group that there were still many aspects regarding the functioning of the European School system under discussion and we shouldn't get too far ahead of ourselves. We were still awaiting the results not only of the evaluation but also progress from the Working Groups on Fees and Categories and there was also the interesting new initiative to hold a Conference on the future of European Schools in May this year.

The Commission made clear that no hasty decisions would be taken and that schools would not be closed overnight or even from one year to the next. The evaluation study was an external one and would assist the Commission to take its decision. Ana Gorey requested that we be informed of the Consultants' recommendations.

At the third meeting of the Administrative Board, 29 June 2006, Leif Berg presented a paper on "School fees for officials of governmental and intergovernmental organisations other than EU" (see Appendix 2). It is 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. In addition, ESK should be allowed to design and implement a pilot scheme which would cover not only sibling reductions but also the ad hoc status which could be afforded to particular client groups based in and around the Capital of Europe as outlined in the paper. The matter was effectively adjourned until such time when the school will have been afforded the requisite autonomy to consider these proposals.

### **Other events related to the European School Karlsruhe**

The ESK Future Group held a preparatory meeting regarding the consultants' evaluation of the "smaller schools" on 11 October 2005, for which Etoile Education prepared a memorandum which then served as the basis of a paper given to the consultants when Etoile Education representatives Leif and Ana were interviewed on 27 January 2006. Some of the children on the bus were also interviewed by the consultants and it was felt that it was a good idea to put a human face on the reasons why families chose to go to ESK.

The meeting was extremely well prepared by the Mr. Moens from the consultants' bureau van Dijk. A document was prepared on behalf of Etoile Education and sent including other relevant background information (See Appendix 3). The final report is now public and ESK was very favourably reviewed. We hope it becomes an instrument providing further momentum for ESK consolidation and growth! It is important to note that the local authorities' further financial support for the school was on record as was the Strasbourg potential.

Mr. Hoyem visited Strasbourg on 26 October 2005 to meet with Mr. Caspary, MEP from Baden-Württemberg, the latter a strong supporter of the school who had already put several written questions to the Commission in the European Parliament on this subject. Mr. Hoyem also met with a representative of the Private Office at the Council of Europe to discuss details of Secretary General Terry Davis's visit to the school. Such a visit was foreseen on two occasions but had to be postponed due to the Secretary General's other engagements.

Mr. Soler, Secondary school French Inspector, visited the school on 16 February 2006 and had asked to speak with Etoile Education representatives to better understand the Strasbourg community's needs and why they chose to send their children so far to attend ESK. Ana Gorey represented the association and explained that the decision to send one's child to the European School Karlsruhe was not lightly taken and entailed not only a serious commitment with regard to the travelling but also with regard to high school fees, to which are added the significant costs incurred by the pupils' daily travel from the Strasbourg area and, for some, the additional costs of after-school care. A document giving the background to the association and also the various and complex reasons why parents choose to send their children to the European School, Karlsruhe, was prepared and sent in addition to other background documents and correspondence regarding the schooling situation in Strasbourg (see Appendix 3).

There are many enquiries from families in Strasbourg or moving to Strasbourg about attending the European School and this is becoming a substantial part of the work of the association. Several children took advantage of the test day scheme to see the school and join in with their future class on an ordinary day. This is proving to be a much appreciated way of visiting the school for prospective families.

### **Networking in Brussels**

At a meeting in Brussels, 17 March 2006, Ana met Philippe Le Guya, from the European Patent Office, Munich, who is very involved in European Schooling and GUIDEE, *Groupe Unitaire pour la Défense des Ecoles Européennes*. Ana has since been given access to their website <http://users.skynet.be/bs140473/index.htm>. It is very helpful to see what the situation is like in other European Schools and in particular to learn the parent's associations' points of view. It is clear that the "smaller schools" have a low profile and also that the agenda of European Union staff is very different from ours, as they feel entitled to free education provided by their employees and so are more concerned about deteriorating standards and overcrowded schools and not encouraging at all about new associated-schooling initiatives.

On this occasion, Ana took the opportunity to meet with Mr. Michael Ryan, Secretary General of the Board of Governor of the European School in a personal capacity. He informed her about developments regarding the "Associated schooling", a 140-page report from the "Fees and Categories Working Group" which he had just received, the consultants' study and also the latest news regarding the High Level Group preparing the May Conference on European Schools System. The meeting was an excellent opportunity to discuss matters in a relaxed atmosphere and with plenty of time, which is not the case during the Admin Board meetings at the school.

## **European Schooling**

A number of significant developments have taken place including:

- the Secretary General of the Council of Europe continues to make considerable efforts concerning the school situation in Strasbourg vis-à-vis all relevant authorities;
- Written Question No. 491 on “Prospects for a European School in Strasbourg” by Mr. Schreiner, April 2006 currently under discussion by the Committee of Ministers
- the initiative by Mr Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the European Commission and Minister Maria van der Hoeven, Minister for Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands and acting president of the European Schools (August 2005 to August 2006), to hold a Conference on the future of European Schools in the Netherlands in May 2006 has been closely followed;
- the Feasibility Study foreseen in Article 21 of the Contrat Triennal now with the Prefecture. A Comité de pilotage is to be created and the Council of Europe will be represented;
- an information afternoon on Schooling at the Council of Europe, 9 March 2006 where various schools were invited to present their schools and educational offer.

It was felt that a more targeted presentation specifically on the European School for a wider Strasbourg public would be worthwhile. Moreover, in order to let people locally know that there is a daily bus service to the ESK and local and Baden-Baden newspapers were contacted. An advertisement was placed in the Baden-Baden daily and was eventually paid for by the school.

## **Other contacts**

On 15 February 2006 Leif Berg wrote to Mr. Patrick Dancourt, President of “International Development of Education in Alsace” (IDEA) requesting that Etoile Education be granted membership. In May Mr. Dancourt informed Leif Berg that “the Bureau of IDEA [was] not in a position to consider [the] application. A more comprehensive answer was promised after an IDEA bureau meeting on 22 May but no further clarification was ever received despite several reminders.

On 30 March 2006, Leif and Ana had met with Bernd Hatesuer, President of the association “*Ecole-Europadistrict-Schule*” and in order to plan a joint strategy for approaching the Mayor of Kehl with a view to a feasibility study as to whether a vacant school building might be suitable to accommodate an associated European school. They agreed to send a joint letter to Mayor Petry. As a result Leif and Bernd met with the Mayor and his adviser on schooling matters on 18 July 2006. The Mayor’s office subsequently made direct contact with the ESK in order to weigh the possibility of opening an annex in Kehl.

## **C – Raising awareness / Information / Advertising**

**Press Club:** The Bureau decided that the association should join the Strasbourg Press Club as the membership fee was reasonable and would give access to their facilities for hosting press briefings and other events.

**Advertising:** As stated above, a Baden-Baden daily carried an advertisement the cost of which was covered by ESK. There was no feedback however from this advertisement.

**European Picnic:** On 21 May 2006 a number of members raised awareness about the European School and our Association at this event in Strasbourg. Next year we should seek to ensure a proper stand.

**ESK Letter and Brochure to Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe:** The school presented itself in a letter to all 46 representations, also mentioning the association and the bus transport.

**Website:** The school continues to host our Website and it is recognised as an important point of information.

### **D – Fun and Fundraising activities**

Main events were:

- **Bonfire night** – 12 November 2005 – where Etoile Education made Pancakes.
- **Open Day** – 1 April 2006 – Etoile Education had a Registration stand for its Sponsored Bike Ride / Festival.
- **Sponsored Bike Ride** – 13 May 2006, when Etoile Education raised awareness and cash for the Bike & Bus Fund

Etoile Education would like to thank everyone for their efforts and contributions into making every single one of these successful and fun.





## Etoile Education Newsletter 6/2006: Bus Transport Information Note<sup>1</sup>

As you know, Etoile Education has been organising the daily school bus from Strasbourg for the last two years, in cooperation with the Transport Committee of the ESK Parents' Association. Annual contracts to this effect were signed on 20 September 2004 and 12 June 2005 with the Transport Committee which in turn signed contracts with Rolf Weißenrieder.

In April 2006 the Transport Committee's President, Mr. Flemming Merrild wrote to Etoile Education indicating that although they had been happy to help us in the past, they had decided at their last board meeting not to renew or extend our contract. In view of this, Etoile Education requested Rolf directly, to inform us how much he would charge the association for the next academic year. On 3 May 2006, our President Leif Berg was informed, via Lise Meyer, Head of the Transport Committee, that he was asking to be paid 560 € per day. This was almost immediately reduced to 540 € per day. In her e-mail to Leif, Mrs. Meyer stated:

“ Pour ce qui est du prix (540 euros) il est totalement justifié. Il y a 2 ans, la firme qui proposait le prix le plus bas demandait déjà 500 € par jour et c'était bien avant la hausse du carburant. Vous avez profité pendant ces 2 années d'un prix défiant toute concurrence, mais en faisant ses calculs Monsieur Weißenrieder s'est aperçu qu'il ne pouvait pas continuer ainsi car les coûts sont supérieurs aux entrées d'argent. Je ne pense pas que vous trouviez à un prix moins élevé que 540 € mais c'est à vous de voir. ... J'avais contacté les entreprises de transport autour de Strasbourg jusqu'à Haguenau (voir pages jaunes) et ma compagnie de Bus qui a un siège à Offenbourg. “

In his reply to Mrs. Meyer, Leif expressed concern about such a steep increase (30%), following which Mrs. Meyer suggested Etoile Education organise its own tender. In these circumstances, in order to enable the Bureau to reach an informed decision and to enable it to justify a possible increase to members, we requested quotes from a number of bus companies responsible for schooling transports. Delegates of the Bureau have visited Rolf and the four other companies on-site in order to describe our requirements as to safety, test-sit the different bus models proposed, etc. Reports were prepared after each meeting for the attention of the full Bureau. These are attached for your information (including the report on our meeting with Rolf on 2 June).

As has always been the case, the safety and the comfort of our children have been the main priority of the Bureau: under no circumstances is the Bureau prepared to recommend any option which does not provide the very safest possible service. Like all of you, the Bureau members also have children on the bus. That being said, and as everywhere else in traffic, 100 % safety can obviously never be guaranteed by anyone, whatever the final choice.

The original reason for this tendering was to justify our decision-making and was not, as has been explained to Rolf on several occasions, a sign of discontent with his service and reliability. As the current service provider Rolf has been given the final chance to bid: he subsequently reduced his original claim to 500 € (on 2 June) and eventually indicated he would settle for our current price of 440 € per day (on 8 June) and eventually came down to 400 euros (on 13 June).

In view of the above and on the understanding that all companies are well-established and reputable, operate school transports and comply with domestic and European maintenance and safety regulations and would be supplying a bus of the same comfort level as the current one, please find below a comparison of the options. The Bureau will be happy to take into account all comments sent to them by 20 June 2006 via Murielle Richardson e-mail: [murielle.richardson@ombudsman.europa.eu](mailto:murielle.richardson@ombudsman.europa.eu). The Bureau will reconvene on 22 June.

Further information/Websites

<sup>1</sup> Due to the voluminous document this will not be distributed on the bus.

Option 1	Rolf	no website
Option 2	Kunegel	<a href="http://www.kunegel.fr/references_fr.htm">http://www.kunegel.fr/references_fr.htm</a>
Option 3	Royer	<a href="http://www.royer-voyages.fr/page_autocars.php">http://www.royer-voyages.fr/page_autocars.php</a>
Option 4	Antoni	<a href="http://www.antoni-voyages.com/pages/societe.htm">http://www.antoni-voyages.com/pages/societe.htm</a>
Option 5	Striebig	no website

#### Bus Brands

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Rolf	Kunegel	Royer	Antoni	Striebig
50 places Mann GT	48 places / 57 places Temsa Safari (2003)	49 places / 59 places Van Hool	48 places Temsa Safari	49 places Mercedes (2003)

#### Comparison of options

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
	Rolf	Kunegel	Royer	Antoni	Striebig
	400 per day	473 per day 438 Friday	390 per day	340 per day 300 Friday	355 per day <sup>2</sup>
144 normal days		68,112€		48,960	
36 Fridays		15,768€		10,800	
Total	72,000€	83,880€	70,200€	59,760€	63,900

#### Estimations per seat

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
	Rolf	Kungel	Royer	Antoni	Striebig
35 kids	2,057€	2,397€	2,006€	1,707€	1,826
40 kids	1,800€	2,097€	1,755€	1,494€	1,598
45 kids	1,600€	1,864€	1,560€	1,328€	1,420
50 kids	1,440€	1,678€	1,404€	1,188€	1,278

<sup>2</sup> This quote was for a 53-seater and the final price for a 49-seater will most likely be somewhat lower. We will know this on 20 June.



## 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	11,110.27 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 25 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.

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



27 January 2006

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTENTION OF *BUREAU VAN DIJK*

**Background:** Etoile Education represents the guardians of some 40 students at the European School Karlsruhe ("ESK") who reside in the Strasbourg area (some 80 kms away) but are travelling to and from the school on a daily basis by means of a bus financed by the parents. These students represent all three categories and Etoile Education has a contract with the Board of Governors of the European Schools affording category 2 status to a significant number of students. For further information about our association, please visit: <http://www.eskar.org/etoile/index.htm>

As families residing in the Strasbourg area we consider ourselves extremely fortunate that our children are within daily driving distance of ESK. The rapidly increasing number of students residing in or around Strasbourg (the so-called "Capital of Europe") but attending the ESK is an indication that both ESK as such and the whole notion of European schooling are becoming better known within the international community in Strasbourg. Moreover, with a daily bus bringing the children from France to Germany and back, ESK has become a real rather than a theoretical choice for parents. In addition, ESK provides continuity of education for those families transferring to or from Brussels or Luxembourg, or any other location with a European institution and a European School.

Indeed, the very fact that an ever growing number of families in the Strasbourg area are choosing to abandon the French (Government-sponsored) option of so-called "international schooling" – which is available for free in Strasbourg at primary and secondary level – in favour of a fee-based European schooling in Karlsruhe (involving up to three hours of traveling and getting up at 5:30 a.m. each day) should be proof enough that the ESK is filling a significant lacunae: the so-called "Capital of Europe" (or rather, the French Government) does not wish to offer schooling tailored to the very specific needs of numerous multilingual and multicultural families.

**Study requested by the Commission:** We very much appreciate having received an invitation to state its views to the consultants with respect to the consultancy requested by the European Commission.

In the worst scenario the Commission's initiative could be seen as a threat also to ESK and not just to the even smaller schools, given that all options are on the table, including "closure". It is part of any consulting exercise however that indeed every alternative should be weighed. We would prefer to take a positive approach to this study and see it as an important sign of interest in the European Schools *and one that could engender considerable long-term benefits for ESK in particular.*

**Relevance of the European School Karlsruhe:** The European School System is more relevant than ever with the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and UNESCO and other major inter-governmental organisations all recommending multilingual, multicultural European education in all member States. The European School System has the advantage that this model already exists and only needs to be adapted to a wider mission than just catering to the children of the staff of EU institutions. Europe is crying out for the EU's engagement on this issue.

European schools help our Continent to prepare our young people to live in a world where frontiers are porous and where work and exchanges are increasingly transnational and transcultural. European institutions have an obligation to sustain the objective of mobility; and education which favours linguistic and cultural diversity is one of them. In this Year of European Mobility this should be emphasised even more.

**Efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability:** In order to get a clear picture of this, the European Schools in question need to be compared not just with European Schools in major capitals, but also with other private and public international schools in Europe, for example in Geneva, Basel, London etc. so as to compare the real costs of international schooling as well as simultaneously finding out what alternatives exist, should for example ESK have to close.

**Financial viability and functioning:** This would be assured, were there to be a wider "recruitment area". In the case of ESK, a feeder school at primary level in Kehl (10 minutes from the heart of Strasbourg on the German side of the Rhine) would be essential in this respect (see further below).

Impact. The fact that children are coming all the way from Strasbourg and other places is a strong indication that there is nothing suitable within the 100 km radius. Moreover, the fact that the number of Category 1 children of staff of the EU Ombudsman's office (in Strasbourg) has doubled in just one year may be seen as an indication that now that there is European School accessible by daily bus from and to Strasbourg, EU employees are definitely more willing to considering a posting to Strasbourg, which was not the case before.

The 50 % ceiling for category 1 students: Judging from its reply of 25 July 2005 to MEP Caspary's written question, the Commission is of the view that an increase in Category 2 students (even a most impressive one, as is the case for ESK) cannot in itself resolve the predicament that the number of Category 1 students in ESK and even smaller schools is far below the ceiling (50 % of the total number enrolled) which was set at the outset.

1. As all options are on the table (or at least should be), so should the question whether the 50 % ceiling really needs to be adhered to in a rigid manner, given the developments on the European scene. While this ceiling might still be a useful reference, it must be possible to allow for exceptions taking into account the individual circumstances of each school.
2. The current number of Category 2 students also comprises a number of children of European institutions such as the Council of Europe who *stricto sensu* do not qualify for Category 1 status (at least not yet; see below). This group should nevertheless be considered "closer" to Category 1 than to Category 3 and specific regard should be had to this fact.
3. The same is true for some of the Category 3 students admitted before the school's policy was changed so as no longer to admit Category 3 pupils (for example, children of Eurocorps staff, its headquarters being based in Strasbourg).
4. Indeed, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe has requested that consideration be given to affording *ad hoc* status to the children of staff of that Organisation. All 25 EU member states are in fact also members of the Council of Europe and numerous activities and programmes of the two institutions tend to overlap. Apparently there has been no progress yet as to this request.

The Council of Europe staff members have altogether hundreds of children who potentially qualify for Category 1 or *ad hoc* (1a ?) status. In fact, the European Parliament in its resolution 2002/2083 (INI) speaks of "children of staff of (a) "European body" which these potential students certainly are.<sup>3</sup>

No drastic change (i.e. closure) should therefore be foreseen with regard to ESK as long as the question of the Council of Europe's fee status has not been resolved, together with the question whether Eurocorps should be afforded similar *ad hoc* status.

5. It is significant and potentially of great benefit to ESK that the consultants are assessing, among other factors, "the potential for cooperation between the European School and other schools", including "associated" ones. Likewise, the consultants are analysing "the educational market" in terms of both availability and demand for an "international" (European?) education up to 100 km away, in this case, from Karlsruhe.<sup>4</sup>

Given the frequent enquiries and expressions of interest our association is receiving, we are confident that the number of students now traveling from the Strasbourg area to ESK despite their early departure (between 5:43 and 6:35 a.m.) is just the tip of the iceberg, and that there would be a very significant interest in primary-level European schooling in the Strasbourg/Kehl area. We therefore welcome the City of Strasbourg's intention to conduct a feasibility study into the modalities for establishing an associated school offering European schooling. We are indeed most interested in developments which would avoid having very young children travel to Karlsruhe on a daily basis and yet give these children the very best introduction to the European School system.

It should be stressed that there is already an ongoing initiative in the Strasbourg/Kehl area towards the opening of an "associated" European school or possibly a branch of ESK in Kehl within the framework of the "Eurodistrict". There are in fact already several bilingual or multilingual schools both in Strasbourg and Kehl which might qualify for either of these two roles, following certain adaptation according to the criteria adopted by the Board of Governors of the European Schools (in particular, the newly established BISS (*Bilingual International School of Strasbourg* (<http://www.lucieberger.com/index1.html>)).

Leif Berg  
President, Etoile Education

<sup>3</sup> See the proposed methodology of the consultancy team, part C, p. 4, last paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> See the proposed methodology, p. 6 and also p. 11, first column of the matrix.