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Report of the Chairman of the 2019 European Baccalaureate Examining Board

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Brussels**

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE 2019 EUROPEAN BACCALAUREATE EXAMINING BOARD
October 2019, Brussels

Ὡσπερ γὰρ τὴν μέλιτταν ὀρώμεν ἐφ’ ἅπαντα μὲν τὰ βλαστήματα καθιζάνουσιν ἀφ’ ἑκάστου δὲ τὰ βέλτιστα λαμβάνουσιν, οὕτω δεῖ καὶ τοὺς παιδείας ὀρεγομένους νεανίας μηδενὸς μὲν ἀπείρως ἔχειν, πανταχόθεν δὲ τὰ χρήσιμα συλλέγειν. Ἰσοκράτους Πρὸς Δημόνικον, 50-52, <http://users.sch.gr/stava/m/arx-a.pdf>

[52] For just as we see the bee settling on all the flowers, and sipping the best from each, so also those who aspire to culture ought not to leave anything untasted, but should gather useful knowledge from every source.¹ For hardly even with these pains can they overcome the defects of nature.

Isocrates with an English Translation in three volumes, by George Norlin, Ph.D., LL.D. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1980.

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INTRODUCTION

The last school year 2018-2019 has been finished and the new school year 2019-2020 has just begun. As Chairman of the European Baccalaureate 2019, I had a very interesting personal and professional experience. I shared the privilege of working for the education of a constantly growing number of pupils enrolled in the European Schools.

The Bac examinations once again passed off very successfully, offering to the graduates of the ES a real European education and “the European Baccalaureate diploma”, which belongs solely to the European Schools and has great reputation in Europe and all over the world. Obviously, I do not think that is necessary to present the unique multi-lingual and multi-cultural European School system and its operation to the readers of this report. I believe that all the members of this “specific” educational system have enough knowledge of the characteristics of the currently 13 fully-fledged European Schools in six countries (Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain and Luxembourg), with a total of more than 27.000 students on roll. Of course, we must add to this number all the already accredited widely scattered across Europe schools and/or other schools which are candidates for accreditation. We hope that the content of this report will offer useful information in order to allow and to facilitate the development of this type of education in the national schools of those Member States which might so wish.

On the basis of the principal of annual rotation of the presidency of the European schools have been nominated and they were officially implemented last years in the process of the Bac procedure the Danish, German and Estonian Chairmen (2016, 2017, 2018). Greece was the country which assured the Presidency of the ES in the 2019 year and the Chairman appointed by the Greek competent authority on the basis of his professional background and his familiarity with the secondary and tertiary cycles. I would like to express my deepest and most sincere gratitude to the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs for nominating me for this duty and for the great confidence and faith shown in me. The Estonian Chairman is replaced the 2018-2019 year by the Greek and he has been replaced for the Bac 2020 by the Spanish delegation.

I hope that I will finalize my mission as Chairman of the Bac 2019, by delivering a helpful report to the ES Board of Governors as well to all the interested stakeholders.

Taking into account that a significant part of my duties was to become familiar with all aspects of the ES system and in particular the Baccalaureate, I tried to find the answer to the following questions: What is the purpose of the Chairman report? What must be checked during the Bac session 2019? How will this be checked?

In order to improve my understanding as possible of this system and to gain a comprehensive overview of its operation, I used various information sources and I have read many official documents of the European Schools. At each stage of my research, I realized that my duties, which strengthened my role and extended my responsibility as Chairman, were based on documents related to the financial, human, pedagogical and technological needs of the Bac’s examinations. I had also the opportunity to read many other documents as the proposals of parents, teachers, students, trying to understand which the impacts of all the current changes in the future of the European Baccalaureate system. The procedure of the written and oral exams of the Bac 2019 was the challenge to meet Directors and Deputy Directors, teachers, students, parents with a variety of national backgrounds and to share with them common tasks as to put together the national and European educational system in the framework of the autonomy and the collaboration. We should underline the fact that Ms Ursula von der Leyen, the Commission's first ever female chief, spent 13 years of her life in Brussels and she speaks all the three vehicular languages fluently. We think that this is one of the most adequate and promising examples of the positive influence and impact of this “specific” educational approach, which offers many possibilities to enhance the self-confidence with the respect for the Others.

In this context, the curricula of each subject taught in the ES have the same common structure and are built and developed specifically for the ES but are not the copy of any national school syllabus and

are characterized by independent structure of each national system. Only the redaction of the syllabi of L1 supported by the participating national inspectors offers more possibilities for the implementation of the national educational aspects, in the framework of the compulsory common structure and the harmonization.

During my mission I have had the chance to meet from ES system extremely friendly and helpful people, who assisted and supported me in exemplary professionalism. I wish to express my deeply felt gratitude to the Board of Governors of the European Schools for having conferred on me the honor of presiding over the European Baccalaureate. Special thanks go to the Greek inspector and President of the 2019 Inspectors' Board, Ms. Margarita Kalogridou, who has been an indispensable resource and help all the way, from meetings in Athens and Brussels, to school visits and proclamations around the Europeans Schools. She provided me with essential, competent, collaborative and friendly support. I particularly thank the management and the staff of the office of the Secretary General in Brussels for their insights, encouragement and support at numerous occasions during this year, Mr. G. Marcheggiano (Secretary General), Mr. A. Beckmann (Deputy Secretary General), as the Unit's Head, Ms E. Rudomino (Head of the Baccalaureate Unit), as well as to Mrs. Carmelina Dispenza and other colleagues from the Baccalaureate Unit Clara Corradini, Ivan Albestain etc. I would hardly have been able to perform my task without the efficient support of this highly qualified and exceptionally committed team. Special thanks also to all the Vice-chairmen helping me to understand, reflect and discuss about the Bac's progress and results. I would also like to thank the members of the Board of Inspectors (Secondary) and the Joint Teaching Committee, the management of the European Schools that I visited, and the many dedicated and qualified experts, internal-external examiners, coordinators, pedagogical advisors of the ES, that I met on-site. We know it was your job to do it, but what you did for the Bac 2019 went beyond the call of duty. I am grateful to all the Stakeholders and the interest members of the school community for their valuable suggestions, for sharing with me their experience and knowledge and providing me support in many ways. Those of us who were involved in this interesting procedure, we know how important this period for the young candidates of the European Bac diploma is. For all these reasons, I prefer to offer suggestions for improvement, describing and wording things in a way that is encouraging and getting insight into what really is important.

My report is structured as follows:

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1. Method

1.1. Focus on observation and key activities of the report

What follows is based on a number of actions undertaken during the past school year (2018-2019), which I will try to summarize briefly. In order to do this, I drew on the studies and documents produced by the various stakeholders.

My planning consisted of 2 phases: **A. Preparatory phase:** desk research of necessary documents, study of the regulations and documentation on the European Baccalaureate, emails sent to the Office and the schools etc. Taking into account pedagogical and practical reasons relating to my research as the size and the type of the ES, the aims and the adequate dates of my proposed visits, etc. the management of each school had been informed by email concerning my visit and the purpose of our meeting. **B. Data analysis:** analysis of the selected data, focusing on the implementation of various aspects of the Baccalaureate 2019 examinations, which would help me to create my report and to demonstrate the impact of the proposed new pedagogical structures not only for the Bac's procedure, but also for the further development of the system.

I have exchanged ideas and opinions with the external University Auditors during the whole school year, the Secondary Inspectors during the meetings of the Board of Inspectors (Secondary). The following up of several meetings, the discussions between the members of the Joint Teaching Committee and the expressed views concerning the Bac's issues were very fruitful. I carried out interviews and discussions with different stakeholders: teachers of the secondary 7 (S7), whose examinations we observed, coordinators of the baccalaureate exams. I also had meetings with the representative of Interparents and discussions with external evaluators of EB in June. I shared an insight into the European Baccalaureate system (EB), that I gained from the Pre-Baccalaureate (Pre-Bac) examinations in January 2019 and from my observational and investigative visits to the European Schools, including the correction centers in Brussels, during the Baccalaureate examinations in June 2019 (my detailed working plan and my activities are presented in Annex I). In addition to visits, meetings and interviews, I asked some more precise questions concerning the conclusions and recommendations for potentially implementation of my predecessors as well as the actual results or reflections that may will be investigated by the Troika, the enlarged presidency and/or by the BAC Unit.

As mentioned above, at all the visited European schools, we were met with great friendliness by Directors and/or Deputy Directors. All of them devoted their time for in-depth meetings (organized in May and June 2019) on issues raised by us, by them or both.

During my analysis, I tried first of all to investigate whether and to what extent the new syllabi, are relevant, coherent, comprehensive and guarantee a qualitative education around the eight key competences for lifelong learning and a successful access to the European higher education systems.

Additionally, regarding the basic, pedagogical information needed, I focused on and analyzed the documents which are published on the website of the ES ([see Bibliography](#)).

The following table gives a detailed account of my observations and key activities: (Annex I).

Date	Location	Activity
Desktop study of Regulatory framework of ES/BAC and other documents relating to the ES (Syllabi, etc.)	The whole year	

October 2018	Athens	Introductory discussions about the area of responsibility with the Greek Inspector. Initial analysis and assessment of the reports of various Chairs of the European Bacculaureate.
October 2018	Brussels, OSG	Participation in the meetings of the Board of Inspectors (Secondary) and the Joint Teaching Committee. Discussions about the area of responsibility with the Greek Inspector, the Head of the Bacculaureate Unit and her collaborators. Discussions with some Directors-Deputy Directors (school management) concerning the planning of monitoring of the Pre-Bacculaureate examinations.
November 2018	Athens	Study of the documentation and regulations for the European Bacculaureate examinations and other relevant aspects of the ES system. Discussions about the area of responsibility with the Greek Inspector. Assisting the BAC unit with setting up external audit of exam papers (Math, Bio, Chemistry, Physic, History).
December 2018	Athens and Ioannina	Discussions about the documentation and regulations for the European Pre-Bacculaureate examinations and the information received from the Head of the Bacculaureate Unit Office and the Greek inspector. Discussions about the area of responsibility with the external auditors.
January 2019		Discussions with a) the Greek Inspector, concerning the information received from the Head of the Bacculaureate Unit Office b) the external auditors.

		Treatment of 2 complaints related to the Pre-bac Desktop study of select exam papers.
February 2019	Athens	Reviewing Pre-Bac examination scripts. Detailed planning of school visits for the written and oral Bacculaureate examinations.
March 2019	Athens	Study of the documentation and regulations for the European Bacculaureate examinations and other relevant aspects of the ES system.
April 2019	Athens	Continuation of the analysis of the reports of various Chairs of the European Bacculaureate. Analysis of my own observations to date.
May / June 2019	ES	Discussions with school management and teaching staff on possible ways of optimizing the European School system and its examination system.
June 2019	ES	Monitoring of the Bacculaureate written examinations. Meetings with school management and teaching staff.
June 2019	ES	Monitoring of the Bacculaureate oral examinations. Meetings with school management, external examiners and teaching staff. Class visits.
June 2019	ES	Monitoring of the Bacculaureate oral examinations. Chairing of the Bacculaureate meeting. Meetings with school management, external examiners and teaching staff. Visits of the Examination centers.
July 2019	ES	Monitoring of the Bacculaureate oral examinations. Meetings with school management, external examiners and teaching staff.

July 2019 OSG		Meeting with the Deputy Secretary General and the Bacallaureate Unit to clarify outstanding issues.
July 2019	OSG ES	Discussions about the organization of the Bacallaureate examinations. Publication of results and proclamation with speech.
August 2019	Brussels	Discussion about the organization of the Bacallaureate examinations. Writing and revision of the report.
June -September 2019	Athens	Writing of the report. Dealing with: a) complaints (...) about and appeals against written and oral examinations by the candidates, or their legal representatives if the candidates are minors. Decisions on substitute examinations. b) absences for a Valid Reason (pupils unable to attend the written examinations, in duly justified cases supported by relevant documents) or without a valid reason c) additionally, written examinations d) list of Special Arrangements.

1.1.1. Regulations and administration

It appears to me that the level of the whole system is indeed highly professional and represents a variety of interests, including those of different member states, units, committees and management layers, parents, teachers, etc. Many changes are foreseen, efficient procedures succeeded during this presidency, many necessary decisions are taken and can be taken the coming years, i.e. as decided, the correctors correct the written scripts only by the Viatique platform. The Inspectors continue to play crucial role(s) in the ES system and especially in relation to the Bacallaureate i.e. for Mathematics, are assigned two inspectors. The inspectors analyze the potential impact of the competence-based approach to assessment that facilitate the admission of European Bacallaureate holders to Universities in the Member Countries (Article V of the ES Convention: "Holders of the European bacallaureate obtained at the School shall: (b) be entitled to seek admission to any university in the territory of any Member State on the same terms as nationals of that Member State with equivalent qualifications.").

The administration of the ES system and the Bac Unit gave remarkably clear, well-structured efficient instructions. On the other hand, more efforts could deploy to communicate the rules more

directly and as soon as possible to those who need to know them at the level of the individual schools and at the central level.

2. Curricula and syllabuses

In fact all syllabi at subject level have been revised and many new complementary courses are in force. Studying the syllabi for different courses in ES system for the written and oral examinations of the BAC 2019 and focusing on their contents, I realized that the European School curriculum, allows some reflections about the Interdisciplinary (cross-curricular) projects. These projects could replace some current courses and change the type/methodology of the formative and/or the final evaluation of the pupils in the classes S6-S7. Of course, we know that reducing or eliminating option choices is a radical proposal and there are some costs and risks.

2.1. Key Competences

All the new syllabuses are competence-based, therefore they all refer to the use of the key competences for lifelong learning, while each syllabus contains Attainment Descriptors, which are used for assessment purposes. The *New Marking System* of the European Schools (in force since September 2018 and the *Framework for the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning in the European Schools* (2018-09-D-67) is another key element of the competence based teaching and learning. The *Council of the European Union* adopted a new Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning on 22nd May 2018. The Recommendation is clear on the purpose of key competences stating that “In a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world, each person will need a wide range of skills and competences and to develop them continually throughout life. The key competences, as defined in this Reference Framework, aim to lay the foundation for achieving more equal and more democratic societies. They respond to the need for inclusive and sustainable growth, social cohesion and further development of the democratic culture” (European Council, 2018, p. 7). It defines eight key competences that are already implemented in each of the Syllabi of the ES.

The *European Commission* is committed to supporting the implementation of the recommendation on key competences by facilitating mutual learning among Member States and developing, in cooperation with Member States, reference materials and tools supporting key competence development. Three challenges have been identified: the use of a variety of learning approaches, contexts and environments; support for teachers and other educational staff; and assessment and validation of competence development. As a first step in this implementation support the Commission has organised a conference on Supporting Key Competence Development: Learning approaches and environments in school education, to take place on 12-13 November 2019 in Brussels. This conference places particular emphasis on the learning approaches and environments that support key competence development at a systemic level and that would support the development of key competences throughout life and in different learning contexts, predominantly in school education. A framework document designed specifically for the European Schools, *Framework for the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning in the European Schools*, was approved in 2018 and Guidelines for schools are currently under development.

Competence development is recognised as an important tenet of education policy and reform across the world. A common thread through all of these competence frameworks is reference to the need to adapt to change, to deal with complexity and to respond to fast changing digital and technological environments. Changing competence needs in the future are highlighted and how the implementation of these competences can be supported is central to the frameworks and their implementation plans. These international frameworks include: The *OECD Key Competencies*

(DeSeCo), 36 OECD Global Competency, 37 framework which focuses on three very broad categories of competences; The framework from 2016 which goes beyond the DeSeCo approach by looking at knowledge and understanding of global and intercultural issues, skills (analytical and critical thinking, ability to interact respectfully, empathy and flexibility) and attitudes (openness, respect for cultural otherness, global mindedness and responsibility); The P21 framework (Partnership for 21st century learning) 38, is a US framework which aims to describe in a comprehensive manner the skills, knowledge and expertise students must master in work and life; the Partnership for 21st Century Skills is a public-private organisation and members are among others big IT companies such as Apple, CISCO, Microsoft and Dell. All this interest in competence frameworks points to a future where competences are central to education systems across Europe and the wider world (European Commission, 2018). The ES system have given special effort to cultivate the Digital competence (DigComp) as constructively as possible. In particular, many educational activities related to the digital competence are developed by teachers themselves. Additionally, in order to assist the IT PEDA working group and inspectors in this work, and to best meet the teachers' needs and those of the pupils and students, the relative WG and the Pedagogical Development Unit collect ideas for educational activities that implement digital competence, inviting teachers of all levels and subjects, to submit concise proposals, which will then be forwarded to the inspectors responsible for the subjects concerned. The main purposes of this effort concerning this competence are the following: communication and collaboration and digital content creation.

The Joint Board of Inspectors (at its meeting of 4-6 February 2019) approved the document "Common Framework for Digital Competence" (2018-09-D-32-en-1) with immediate entry into force, and in particular its Action Point 1.2, which aims to help teachers promote digital competence across all subjects, cycles and year groups by giving them examples of learning activities which they can use in class.

Each subject is therefore invited to develop an annex to its curriculum, containing pedagogical scenarios for developing students' digital competence. The help of teachers will certainly be solicited. For the sake of cost and time efficiency, the Joint Board of Inspectors also proposed, on the one hand, to develop a common annex for all groups of languages (e. g. one annex for all L1s, another for all L2s, etc.), and on the other hand, in the case of newly approved syllabuses to let the Inspector responsible for the subject decide whether or not to draft an annex. The decision will be based on the degree of integration of digital competence in the syllabus in question.

Normally we try to clarify the level of the knowledge and the competences students are expected to learn and achieve, offering to them relevant support materials and assessment instruments in order to support the acquisition and the assessment of the eight competences. It means that, even if the revision of many syllabi and the harmonization regarding many courses were successful the biggest challenge in the ES is the evaluation of the learning process based on these competences and the New marking System. Each competency needs to be broken down into knowledge components, skills and dispositions. A step which was discussed at the meeting of the Board of Inspectors (Secondary) in June 2018 and still now we try to find the adequate solution. There are plans to integrate successful integration of key competences into the assessment process and the teachers should be supported in developing competence-oriented approaches in their specific subjects by e.g. making appropriate use of the SharePoint. In the light of that commitment, measures have been taken in order to increase the attractiveness of the ES, to retain duly qualified staff and to ensure a high standard of teaching and learning. We think that the ES should continue to make efforts to ensure that a lot of qualified experts/external examiners will be available, too.

2.2. The curricula offered in the European Schools

The curricula offered in the European schools to an individual pupil or to the pupils of the same class or different sections should conform to the curricula offered by European Universities or by

European Institutes of Higher Education. The European Bacculaureate could also be adjusted to fit better with the new curricular arrangements, university entry and study requirements. We know that the resolution of some debates on these issues depends not only on our views, perspectives or changing attitudes and mechanisms for ensuring regular reviews, updates, quality control, adequate feedback etc. but on curriculum decisions made by the stakeholders of the system. Taking also into account that all the ES are informed in a uniformed and in details way about new curricula, all the members of the school community can share their proposals and ideas by digital way. We underline the need that, at the beginning of the School year, all the Accredited schools should inform the Bac Unit, the Pedagogical Development Unit etc. sending a list of all the locally recruited teachers for each subject. It is extremely important for the Accredited Schools that, according to the AIREB, are obliged to put forward the proposals from their third participation to the Bac session.

We know that profound changes of the previous practices must be prepared carefully: this includes creating a long-term strategy moving step-by-step, creating conditions for disseminating good practices throughout the system. In the European Schools system, there were several activities to support all the needed changes i.e. issuing guidelines with concrete examples, pre-service and in-service training of the teachers, circulating materials on the new marking system, facilitating the implementation process of the competences and the marking system. Our proposals give expression to a more comprehensive, educative, pedagogical and relevant set of arrangements for the European School system, considering as a basic prerequisite that all the taught or offered lessons should meet the requirements of modern, competence-based teaching and new didactic approaches. We can easily understand that from one European school to the other there are very successful teaching methods, and a few examples where for one reason or another is not the case. Thus, the one of the most important challenge for the ES system is to strengthen the harmonization, which starts from the collaboration and the initiatives taken by i.e. the Management of each school, the inspectors who will try to develop and support schools' strategic planning and self-evaluation etc.

3. Teaching and Teacher development

I agree with the EB chairman 2017, who emphasized the need to view teaching practice together with the European Bacculaureate, to share best practices in order to harmonize teaching, learning and assessment across all classes and sections of the ES. We understand that all the teachers are not prepared at similar levels to follow all the needed steps of the syllabi of the ES. The new teachers maybe need a different type of in-service education. The ES, including the Accredited schools, should inform at the beginning of the school year the inspectors in charge the new arrivals and the changes of the contract of the non-seconded teachers.

Following a number of discussions on the general needs of the schools, measures facilitating CPD and the competence-based teaching and learning. The CPD is strongly linked to the implementation of the new syllabuses, and the (de)-centralized trainings should reach all teachers. These are centralized trainings that are organized by the inspectors, and de-centralized trainings, which could be realized by the target Subject Referents (qualified and motivated members of the staff of each school), in collaboration with the school management (on the basis of the findings of the Whole School Inspection/Audit and the self-evaluation of the school) and the inspectors, too. The purpose is how with flexibility, regarding the ways of organizing these trainings, resolve the problems, respond to the individual needs of the teachers and the local needs. We believe that defining clearly the profile and the functions of an Educational Adviser and a Principal Educational Adviser and taking into account the final proposals concerning the function 'Assistant to the Deputy Directors', one in the Nursery/Primary and one other in the Secondary cycle in every school and the establishment of Advisory Teams, the new structure would be implemented and support gradually over the coming years for the organisation of the CDP trainings. This approach could also increase the interest of the teachers, adding many positive impacts on the recognition of their individual and professional efforts

in the school projects. It could also have a beneficial impact in assessment practices overall and not only in the European Bacallaureate cycle.

4. Examination process

The Bacallaureate examinations is an issue that has been mentioned on several occasions by previous Chairmen of the European Bacallaureate in their reports and discussed at length in the Working Groups “Assessment Secondary” and “European Bacallaureate –Written and Oral Examinations”. It has also been dealt with at the Board of Governors, the Board of Inspectors (Secondary), the Joint Teaching Committee etc. The basis for the examinations is provided in the European Bacallaureate Memorandum, a framework document gathering all organizational aspects of each EB session. It involves Schools, Inspectors and Examiners. This year due to the complexity of the system and the continuously necessary changes, due to the availability or not of all stakeholders involved, the Memorandum, doc. 2019-01-D-1-de/en/fr-4 had been approved by Written procedure 2019/19, as it is standard procedure. There are two editions of the Memorandum: One for the schools, where the name of the correctors is not disclosed, within the context and of anonymity of corrections and one for the inspectors and for the EB Chairman, where the names of the correctors selected and available is mentioned, in accordance with the instructions given by the Inspectors. The EB Unit is responsible for the invitations to the examiners to take part in the EB session. Therefore, when the experts/external correctors had some questions related to their participation i.e. about the dates and the conduct of the written examinations, they addressed to the responsible and always available EB Unit.

In the ES system the use of the Viatique-platform permits to a teacher of a European Bacallaureate candidate, to participate in the correction, just without knowing whose script he/she corrects since all the scripts are anonymized. For many educational national systems it is not foreseen for the admission of the candidates to higher education exams the participation of their class teacher. On the other hand, the teachers are willing to continue assessing their own pupils as first correctors because they are very aware of the contents of the syllabus and as such the assessment can be very much adjusted to the pupils’ learning experience and more pedagogically fair. In addition, as referred by some of them, some Member States resort solely to internal assessment. The anonymization by using codes of European Bacallaureate written examinations solves this problem, taking into account that exists always the danger for the class teacher to recognize in the scripts the personal way/graphic of writing of their students. We believe that the correction by external correctors could also be questionable if there is lack of familiarity with education approach or syllabuses of the ES. That implies also the recognition of the European Bacallaureate by the different education institutions in the member states or elsewhere. A good number of our external correctors could be ex-teachers of the European schools with their continuously teaching practice in the ES system, their information of the latest trends in education and assessment etc. We know also that according to ES’ regulations a mark disagreement of over two marks (on a total of ten) on a whole script between the first and the second corrector request the third correction. Moreover, our regulations do not consider mark disagreement on one question of the script, but only in the marking disagreement of the whole subject/script. The on-line correction system permit to avoid at least total mark disagreement on individual items. Of course, the main purpose is to continue to provide the adequate measures in order to cultivate the validity and to assure the recognition of the European Bac diploma (on the basis of the agreement which has been signed by the member states).

4.1. The Pre-Bac and its role, arrangement of examinations and possible alternatives

As instruments of summative evaluation, Baccalaureate and Pre-Baccalaureate written/oral examinations measure attainment in a way that provides an accurate description of the level at which all the requested subject and overall competences have been attained. Both, Bac and Pre-bac, also serve to establish rankings according to the results of the candidates. This information is crucial because depending of the legislation of each Member-State of EU the students have access to the further education studies in different establishments in their own or many other countries.

The Pre-Baccalaureate long written examinations, in the last two weeks of January/10 days and in addition to the time required for planning and grading papers, monitoring the process etc., have been put into question on a number of cases. Ten days which is urgently needed for lessons and profound self-evaluation. Some Stakeholders believe that the Pre-Bac helps the candidates, getting acquainted with the examination type and its conditions. For the summative examination of June the students have been trained to succeed with almost the same every year questions and we ensure the harmonization in the European Baccalaureate Cycle. The European Baccalaureate written examinations are identical for all pupils regardless of the School and the language section they are taught in (with the exception of languages examinations, when the examination differs between the languages). It means that this type of examinations for the Pre-Bac in S7 are based on common documents and guidelines such as the assessment and evaluation specifications contained in the different syllabuses. In this context, these examinations are prepared in agreement among all the teachers who are teaching the same subject in a European School and must be harmonized only within each school and not within all the ES as the Bac. It means that the preparation and grading of exam papers is completely internal to the individual school, with the same exam papers used for all students in a given subject, across language sections (naturally, with translation where relevant); only assess the part of the syllabi which has been covered up to and including the first semester of S7 harmonised at school level. The Pre-bac exams are a well-defined and recognizable achievement that allows schools and teachers to focus on particular areas of the subject taught within a defined framework, that meets relevant criteria, correction and marking criteria transparent, valid and comprehensible which also prepares the pre-university level academic work.

But it is also noted that the students have the opportunity working in the classroom with past papers and the conditions of the European Baccalaureate and with the harmonized examinations of the S5 and S6 (two semesters/ B-examinations). So, the students will be for the Bac examinations sufficiently prepared. Nevertheless, the teachers of S7 class have a huge workload to elaborate the Pre-Bac subjects and to provide their proposals, upon request of the inspectors, through the EB Unit, for the European Baccalaureate subjects. Additionally it is very difficult for the inspectors before the preselection/selection of the Bac subjects to check in December or before January's examinations if the subjects in the different schools and at the school level, are or not adequate.

The digitalization of examination process by Viatique platform is one of the aims for the future. There are several challenges to consider when moving towards digital examination of the scripts and the very careful preparation and succeed implementation in the Pre-Bac written exams should be considered as a useful approach and tool. The system is easy to manage the on line correction.

If we abolish in S7 the Pre-Bac, we will deal with the problem of appeals only in June instead of twice during the same school year. For example, having already received the script and the exam questions, a father requested the possibility to also receive a copy of the marking criteria, in order to determine whether or not the mark obtained by his son was justified or not.

Finally, taking into account that the sample of the observations of the Pre -Bac examinations was not possible to be enough, adequate and indicated, I preferred to underline the importance for the whole system of this kind of examinations, having a solid quality control of this assessment but, without inconveniences at the schools and lower level of stress to the teachers and students. I preferred to discuss and take up the function and the form of the Pre-Bac at almost every possible meeting with the various agents/stakeholders of the ES system, to answer all the appeared appeals,

in general to investigate crucial aspects of this procedure. My discussions with school management teams and teaching staff in the schools concerning the Pre-Bac examinations can be summed up as follows: Which methods and type of tests used to evaluate students' learning in S7 during the first semester? Bearing in mind that this part of assessment is not centralized and is managed locally at schools. Can we put the Pre-Bac on the same level of the S5 and s6 exams? Should we define precisely how the correction is done from all the teachers on the photocopies i.e. As corrector did you make marks on the examination scripts, did you use correction grids, standardised assessment (moderation) for your annotations following the assessment criteria and marking instructions established by the relevant Inspectors? Do you think that the marks etc. of the Pre-Bac could be introduced in the on-line correction tool as the Bac's marks? Do you think that instead of providing the original script (photocopies) to the students it's better to use electronic versions in order to gain time offering to the pupils the possibility to see their correction as soon as possible and avoid any procedural irregularity or a manifest error of assessment adversely affecting the candidate?

The study of the papers of the Pre-Bac examinations, the search and random inspection of the locally produced question papers/exam papers (e.g. mathematics, physics, L1, L2) comparing them to the ordinary Bac exam papers, confirm us - at which I was able to check- were well organized and their conduct corresponded to the examination regulations for the 2019 European Baccalaureate (see all the relative Arrangements for implementing the Regulations for the European Baccalaureate). The teachers make efforts to use common correction marks and criteria that could be made and discussed in class in a uniform manner. Recent statistics confirm that there is a slightly higher preliminary mark on average, even if is difficult to predict the outcome, in terms of mark averages or gain time and money.

One could think, for instance, of individual or group based students one or two major projects in selected subjects and matters which could favor more independent personal, creative, critical and interdisciplinary work and could preferably be evaluated in S6 and also be assessed at a final oral exam in interdisciplinary learning, media-aided presentation and dialogical communication skills.

The possibility of introducing a multidisciplinary (cross-curricular) project has also been discussed and we are wondering how it should be better cultivated and explored, in order to guarantee the success of this idea. A number of aspects should be taken into consideration. Consequently, the pre-baccalaureate could be transferred to the S6 and thus allow the organization of a transversal project. This is a very important issue, concerning the recognition of the European Baccalaureate Diploma in the different member states and the equivalences between the European Baccalaureate and the upper secondary leaving certificate of national schools and admission of European Baccalaureate-holders to Universities in the EU member states and all over the world.

This could be accompanied by measures to ensure that this work is adequately assessed in and between the schools and that it is really done by the interested students, that better reflect the maturity proper to their age and the self-evaluation.

Below, I will make references to recent detailed discussions e.g. in Joint Teaching Committee (in February 2018, see Doc: 2018-01-D-47-et-1), trying to reach a shared understanding how the pre-Bac with project work together with integrating key competences into teaching and learning process could be effectively and pedagogically well implemented. Careful consideration would need to be given as to which examination formats are best suited to which subject areas and to be found the best way to harmonize the Pre-Bac throughout the EB system.

The assurance of the quality of Pre-Baccalaureate examinations and s6 examinations falls primarily within each School. If the pre-Bac will be not abolished, the directorate of each School through the subject coordinators should ensure that all Pre-Baccalaureate examinations are original, harmonised and adjusted to the syllabuses. Pre-Baccalaureate examinations will also be available to the Inspectorate for their consideration.

In conclusion, many questions remain to be answered by the ES on this issue, particularly in terms of thorough analysis on what is officially foreseen in the European Schools with respect to

examinations and marking in the secondary cycle, in addition with the organizational feasibility in schools, resources etc.

4.2. THE WRITTEN BAC EXAMINATIONS

The written examinations were very carefully prepared and very well organized by the Bacalaureate Unit, as well as by the schools that I visited. The implementation European Bacalaureate 2019 – Instructions for the Examination Centers and schools are clearly structured and very well presented overall. The instructions were sent to the centers by the Bacalaureate Unit in May (the Music portfolio, the schools will communicate to the European Bacalaureate Unit a link for its deposit, easily accessible to all the correctors) and contained all the relevant information, including specific information for the individual examination subjects and also useful information about special arrangements for students with special needs. For the final Bac exams on the basis of my observation and the comments of the Vice Presidents, neither any serious irregularities nor violations of the examination regulations were thoroughly observed at the schools, including the parts concerning opening of envelopes with exam papers, surveillance of exams etc. nor were any serious problems reported to me by the BAC Unit.

In case of an emergency situation the responsible person took appropriately and immediately action. He was in permanent contact with the ICT support staff. As a result, all the problems were resolved quickly and professionally by the Bacalaureate Unit and the school. Correction centers had foreseen enough electric plugs, a card with the login and password to access the WIFI for the external correctors etc.

The external correctors using the on-line correction platform (that is more convenient for the external correctors and more cost-efficient), started their corrections from home the very moment they received the scripts. This allowed more time to correction and during the meetings in the correction centers the inspectors had the opportunity to share good practice and exchange experiences among correctors in order to achieve further harmonization, which may also lead to revising and fine-tuning the corrections before final validation, following the guidelines and additional instructions issued by the inspectors. Meetings were also been held at a distance, using the communication tools, which are integrated and implemented in the system. All correctors complete without delay the correction of each individual paper with a commentary justifying the mark awarded (i.e. explaining how the mark awarded is in compliance with the marking criteria, whether specifically referring to a question and/or to the examination paper as a whole). Overall, there were only some minor problems for assignment of third corrections, which, however, have been solved. It will be useful to clarify that any external examiner on the inspectors' lists is potential third corrector. There were, however, rare incidents that might give rise to consideration of a procedural change. In one subject a text marked as an original quote did not correspond to the original. This is an example of the kind of error that would have required immediate correction. However, the Arrangements for implementing the Regulations do not provide for such a possibility, providing only that such errors are considered when the scripts are corrected and marked.

The examination question papers, could be communicated to the schools electronically and be opened /accessed in good time before the start of the examination. In this case, the responsible people would have enough time to note and react for any errors to be corrected. Another possibility that we could look at could be the electronic transmission of the examination papers to be printed in the schools but in this case we need to use reliable electronic tools and establish safety and security protocols in order to avoid leaks or other problems like, for example, the fidelity of the printing. In fact, a mixed system could also be used. Schools should support implementing changes in the examination system, taking responsibility for analyzing their examination process and results on the basis of a long-term planning and strategy.

4.2.1 Content and assessment of examination papers

Reference should be made to the difficulties and the specific comments of the first correctors, which the second correctors had taken into account i.e. the quality of the texts, the number and the quality of the questions and sub-questions in- each subject, the difficulty to be interpreted by the students etc. We know that ‘suggested answers’ has been made compulsory for the examination questions in each subject. Such information is important primarily for the content and the structure of the questions, because clarity regarding expected student performance is a prerequisite for judging whether a question is technically and didactically appropriate for the required level of performance and whether it meets all the requirements of the curriculum. For the internal and external examiner, a level of expectation and an outline of possible answers are essential for a proper and fair assessment of a student’s performance. I have noted that some subjects - paper of this year - were the occasion of some reactions, which I attribute in part to an exaggerated expectation of “similarity” of exam papers from different years, or to the expressed in a variety of ways personal opinions that these papers were more difficult than last year and/or excessively focused on a very demanding cognitive level.

4.3. THE ORAL BAC EXAMINATIONS

Oral examinations have also been discussed in the different working groups. By conversations with inspectors and school managements, is confirmed that the level and format of the oral examinations in language subjects tends to be very appropriate. In organizational terms, the examinations in all the schools that I visited were well prepared and conducted in accordance with the regulations. However, in oral examinations of Math (offered as an oral subject to those who choose the Math 5P course) and in general in Science, the examiners should test and ensure the assessment of the competences that are linked to the autonomous problem solving, the modelling and deductive reasoning etc. In other words, to avoid questions which could, more or less, have been posed at a written exam.

Another kind of assessment which could be incorporated into the final oral examinations in S6 and/or S7 is when in the class there two examiners and two candidates paired together. In this context, we can cultivate and assess the listening comprehension and interactive competence between the two candidates, on the basis of course, of their individual marking evaluation. The method of the simultaneous assessment of two candidates between are not yet an integral part of the European Baccalaureate as well as the use of the Audio-recorded method, which is not yet.

My question is why during the oral exams, which are essential in order to assess certain competences and communication skills, the correctors ask identical or nearly identical questions as during the written examination process. implemented in the Bac’s oral examinations. After having observed the preparation of some ES for the oral exams and discussed with the Management of the school before the start of the exams, I have attended some oral examinations, in a different area of subjects. My impression is that the oral practices are or should be natural part of the learning and final assessment process, particularly in the case of the absence in examinations of the Pre-Bac as has been proposed by some Stakeholders. It should also be reminded that practice for these oral examinations should happen all through the European Baccalaureate cycle and not only during the Bac session. In order to facilitate the work of the teachers and make it more efficient, we should explore the possibility of building up a large data bank “pool” of oral questions or to offer many different types of question. Subject/class teachers and experts/external examiners could select 50% of the pool’s questions managed by the inspectors (25% and 25%) and the other 50% could be proposed by the class teachers and/or the experts who should in any case to follow the instructions of the responsible for this subject inspector. The high quality of questions and sub-questions, concerning the content and the linguistic aspects, should be balanced, assessed proportionally, and should cover all the parts, elements, including the prescribed competences, in the relevant syllabus. It would also work towards

and ensure the principle of the harmonization, since all schools should use the same data bank and the same type of questions.

Great care and attention should be put in the elaboration of the different language versions of the questions, respecting the needs of a qualitative translation as well as the different models and the criteria of the ES' assessment, including the principles of Bloom's taxonomy. Finally, as the formatting of the European Baccalaureate written and orals examination, are both a very complex and time-consuming task, we should pay attention and check in the preparation room and in general at the examination center, if there is compliance with internal control standards and if the candidates do not suffer from non acceptable noise.

5. Analysis of the external evaluation (University Observation) /Audits by University

In 2018-2019, the Board of Inspectors decided which subjects should be submitted to the auditing. In this context, I facilitated five such Audits by Greek Universities. The subjects of Mathematics 3 and 5p, Sciences: Biology 4p, Physics, Chemistry and History were observed externally by five of the Higher Education Greek experts. Since 2016, regular University observation and external review of the written examination papers have been very much welcomed by the State holders, offering an additional quality assurance measure of the European Baccalaureate and a precious tool, that reassure all the members of the school community of the adequacy of the papers in question, before the final version of the subjects could be used in the written examinations. In addition, the analysis and the suggesting improvements to the exam papers of the external evaluation offer us the possibility to receive a more objective and critical view of the syllabi in force, as well as of the originality, **comprehensiveness, fairness, validity, reliability, clarity and simplicity of the wording of the questions**. The level of difficulty and cognitive operations that the pupils need to perform when answering the different questions in the examination should be varied, too. It is reasonable, that the University Observation should be continued and regularly carried out for as more possible subjects every year and not only for the mentioned above subjects. At least for the subjects which must be translated in the three vehicular languages in L2. As a result, and according to the document 2019-01-D-59-fr-3, the Board of Governors decided to approve the proposed subjects for university observations, with a view to application with effect from the 2020 European Baccalaureate session. The five external auditors/experts who have experience in assessment and the elaboration of secondary school entrance examinations to the higher education institutions, after detailed reading of the: official syllabus of each subject, proposed examination papers/grids, suggested answers for the Bac2019, Arrangements for implementing the Regulations for the European Baccalaureate (Applicable for the Year 2019 European Baccalaureate session), previous Bac main papers of the subjects 2017 and 2018 and finally voting on BAC proposals, confirmed that all the examination papers for the Bac 2019 session covered the knowledge to be tested and that the papers are in line with the relative syllabi. To this end, one expert confirmed "I answered all questions independently and then compared the solutions against those provided to me". The comments and the proposals for corrections and improvement in the exam papers, were accepted by the responsible inspectors and the experts, considering that the main purpose for both experienced groups was to optimize the questions and to make the assessment grids as more possible precious. Taking into account that the exam questions are proposed by teachers within the ES, and these proposals may be, more or less, modified by the inspector and the experts and after the exams very often we receive some general observations and responses raised by a few teachers, I think that the Audit of University gave better outlook and clearness to the examination work and will be a help for elaborating exam questions in the future. It is clear, that adopting some changes from the remarks could improve the examination papers in question.

Finally, the June 2019 examination papers fitted the purpose of testing the knowledge and skills/abilities required in the relative Syllabus for European Schools. More precisely, we consider as positive aspects that: a number of questions are broken down into small, easily manageable pieces, the examination mainly covered the year 7 syllabi, but also tests knowledge gained in previous years, especially year 6 (i.e. in Biology approximately 90% and about 10%, respectively), the assessment seemed reasonable and fair, the students should analyze the positive and negative consequences of an historical issue, they were guided by the sub-questions who help the candidates to be able to establish such relationships with news and current affairs. The correction grid was a guide to facilitate teachers in their common assessment of an essay and it had not been taken as a definitive framework. The marking scheme should not be too restrictive and prescribed. Sometimes the marking scheme disadvantages students in terms of marks.

In History, the five documents used in the part of the examination were well chosen, as they differ to each other in terms of perspective, category, or genre, language and time of creation. (a) The students should be fully answered the questions (b) knowledge of all topics of the Core Course were required, as well as basic knowledge of year 6 Core Course, (c) source-based skills -critical understanding, analyzing and composing of source material- were demanded. In Biology, the examination paper followed the needed weighting of the marks of three different sections, all questions were original and syllabus relevant, according to the document “details and limits of the 7th year, 4 period, biology syllabus –2018). Questions also incorporated a combination of recall, comprehension, analysis, application and evaluation. On the basis of the auditors’ opinion, in all sections, the part of each question demanding rote learning of knowledge did not exceed much of 30% of the total points allocated to this question, while the rest of the question required understanding, knowledge transfer, analysis and interpretation of experimental biological data. In Chemistry, most of the exercises were based on everyday life, well-structured and offered a reliable evaluation of the students' ability to remember-know, to understand, to apply general knowledge to certain problems and finally to analyze and create. The whole paper of the examination was well prepared. In Physics, some questions required remembering facts and equations, others required understanding of definitions and applying laws and rules or analyzing and evaluating physical situations and experimental setups. The implementation of the given below recommendations governed on the one hand, by the General Rules and on the other, by the subject syllabuses themselves, which can involve certain specificities in terms of assessment for the subjects in question.

Improvement of the quality of translated examination question papers

It is important not only to ensure that the questions are technically correct, but also to make sure that the wording of the questions satisfies the level of language. The equivalence between the original examination question paper and translated versions must be checked more carefully. For example, an expert noticed “in the literature the term “grating constant” is used either for the inverse of the number of lines per unit length (as in the provided solutions) or directly for the number of lines per unit length”. Some questions have been criticized concerning the level of the required competences and several tasks in which students have to deal and give an answer. The examinations should give to all candidates the opportunity to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. There was not in all cases a full range of questions “from easy to more complex”, resulting in the risk of losing several marks for weaker candidates. Due to the difficult questions a lot of reading and understanding time is needed. In addition, the highly abstract and complicated formulations of questions have to be avoided because they make unnecessarily difficult to understand the questions and are therefore possibly disadvantageous to some students. The used terms, words, phrases should be within the subject vocabulary. Especially for the questions of the subjects taught in L2, normally, we avoid to ask questions which request explanations or words’ clarification. The equivalence of some questions should more sufficiently and more clear cover all the subchapters. For some questions, it was necessary to add a requirement for justification (“Justify your answer”). An alternative expression or changes of words/differ wording has been proposed to avoid misunderstandings. Some symbols

“should be changed” in order to be consistent with symbol used in the text. The examination of the Bac 2019 had a similar structure to the 2018 exam, even if some parents/students noticed that it was not the case. It is very important to ensure standardisation and harmonisation of the external appearance of the written examination papers in the European Bacculaureate cycle. In Mathematics/Sciences etc. the students must answer the sub-questions independently. It means that one task cannot depend on the results reached at another task. Between the original examination question papers and the proposed solutions and mark scheme the remarks should be checked carefully. The ‘suggested answers’ must include precise information about the kind and the scope of possible student performance and must, in particular, indicate clearly the level of competence expected in the answers to each question or sub-question and might affect the correction of the papers. The descriptors used in Viatique-platform should correspond perfectly to the outline. There was an overload of documents, which took time to read, analyze and interpret, making time management difficult as it seemed that we had more to do.

In conclusion, the examination paper should contain the questions that require low-order thinking and questions that require high-order thinking. The level of difficulty of examination questions that the students need to perform when answering the questions demonstrate how the tasks support the development of the key competences such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, literacy, linguistic, mathematical, digital, personal/individual and social learning, entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression competences. As has been repeatedly noted, special attention should be paid to the linguistic adequacy of translations and conceptual compliance of different language versions of the same examination paper and finally to the common use of signs (such as +/- or ?/!) for marking content. It is not so vain to repeat that the content of the questions should also take into account the principles of the linguistic requests. The questions should be structured with L2 students in mind, too (i.e. History). The final essay question should allow students to use the understanding of the whole syllabus.

6. Quality Assurance of European Bacculaureate

Quality assurance of the EB 2019 has been regulated by the document “Quality Assurance of the 2019 European Bacculaureate written and oral examination–procedure”.

6.1. The role of the Inspectors

The document Quality Assurance of the 2019 European Bacculaureate written and oral examination–procedure states that the presence of inspectors during the written and oral examinations is a central aspect of the quality assurance framework of EB. From my own -one year- experience as Bac 2019 Chairman, and as I can confirm what some of my predecessors already found: the role of the inspectors is influential in ES system. In fact, the inspectors perform a series of assessment and evaluation tasks as most of them are responsible not only for their mother/L1 language bacculaureate exams (written and oral questions in all languages of the ES). It is benefit for each presidency that at least one of the Vice Presidents has previous experience, so they are accustomed to the working method of the final exams. We should ensure at least one inspector in each subject taught in the ES system, in order to contribute to the preparation as president and/or member of one or more working groups, to facilitate the implementation of any new procedure of the ES system, the success of each presidency, to do one or more Whole School Inspection and/or an Audit, etc. In case no Inspector volunteers for a given subject, it is the role of the presidency to take the lead, as it is the case of the Bac 2019 session.

As a consequence, the Inspectors are systematically overburdened given the wide range of their responsibilities. As I found out, during the last year there were many changes in inspectors’ team and none of the inspectors volunteered to lead some subject areas (i.e. Geography, Economy). Finally, the positions of inspectors responsible for these subjects were filled (for Geography by the President of

the Board of inspectors for Secondary) and none of the subjects remained uncovered during the session. Inspectors' activities have strong influence, but I am afraid that their expertise and the quality of their work is not enough monitored and harmonized on the basis of their real needs. Hence, the situation is somewhat problematic from the quality assurance perspective. A new document might it be enough to relieve the Inspectors of additional responsibilities and the percentage of working time allocated to ES and in their home countries (see doc: 2018-09-D-2-fr-en-3). If the inspector is relatively new to the system – we should give him or her the opportunity for a better future integration. We also believe that working through collaborative e-platforms they can ensure the necessary balance between their national and for the ES duties, that if not considered seriously could create constraints for students or schools, notably with Brexit in prospect.

But mostly interested issue is the implementation of the document 'Guidelines for the new marking system' (2017-05-D-29), focusing on the Bac examinations (written and oral) that it will be used as a basis by the Inspectors to determine the generic matrix, a sample paper (if necessary) and a marking scheme/descriptive assessment scale for the sample paper for their specific subject and more particular for the L1, L2, L3, L4, L5 as soon as possible (see doc. 2019-05-D-38-en-1, 2019-06-D-8-en-2 etc.). For all the proposals developed during the Greek presidency we wait that we will have the necessary feedback during the meetings of the Spanish presidency.

6.2. External Experts

External experts also have a very important role in the ES and the European Baccalaureate process. Schools deposit the proposals on the Sharepoint, and experts, also using the Sharepoint, are in charge of the elaboration of written examination papers as well as of the monitoring of the oral questions, under the guidance, the coordination and in close collaboration of (with) the inspectors responsible for each subject. It is crucial at the end of the examination session, the experts who are qualified in the subject to provide a paper for comments on the written and oral questions. The truth is that for some subjects is not easy to find real competent experts. In this context, we propose to think how we could increase the attractiveness of the ES for the experts/external correctors, too.

6.2.1. Internal/External Correction of written examinations

My question is if it is possible and how to ensure the reliability of the final Bac result. Is there a way that could drastically minimize the risk for relevant work to have different assessment and different weight to teachers' marks? Which other models could for the ES' Quality Assurance relative WG propose and apply, ensuring that this desirable phenomenon does not influence the average of final baccalaureate marks to which the internal and external student's teacher contributed? This is a challenge for the ES, and we should give an answer that we hope that it will be more efficient and less costly measure.

The search of the written examination papers has made it clear that these kind of measures as quality of translation, linguistic aspects etc. should be an excellent quality assurance instrument. In this perspective, the languages are used not only as media of instruction but also as index of logical continuity and coherence of speech and critical thinking.

Let me explain what I mean. Remarks on many subjects must be written in either EN-FR-DE. Remarks on literary subjects can be written in the language of the examination. It is obvious that language examinations cannot be identical from one language to another and as mentioned above, every year inaccuracies in the translation of examination questions have developed into one or more recurring problems in Pre-Bac and Bac questions, even if the translations have been checked with great care by bilingual experts and some complaints from parents and teachers seemed to be symptomatic of the fact that they have misconceptions, regarding teaching and learning and/or the information provided by the students. Last year we had relatively few comments and appeals and the problems with translations seemed rather limited. Those who deal with the inherent problems of

translation they understand that complete equivalence between the original and the translated text is very difficult. Maybe the closest possible approximation can only be achieved by a professional translator or by a bilingual subject expert, who is very competent but less informed concerning the teaching requirements of the ES system. However, I am wondering whether the translation of the subjects by a translator is legal and if the European Schools are authorised to produce a translation in all the requested languages that might increase the risk to minimize the objectivity and validity of the written exam papers. And I am wondering, also, whether the translator has the necessary pedagogical and cognitive experience of the requested to translate subject. We know that even the class teacher and the bilingual expert, very often both do not follow the same approach. However, they must share a common structure and assess all the required competences, using the same methods and having common vision. Although there are external evaluators as second correctors and concrete instructions for the evaluators to guarantee equal treatment of students, the class teacher, as first corrector, still has a strong influence on the assessment. I hope that the proposal that teachers will not correct the scripts of their students but the scripts of other students, including the anonymous on-line correction system Viatique in ES, will be a proof of independent and transparent correction.

Hence, it should be made clear that teaching and learning are not just a matter of reproducing knowledge from the syllabi. This modern teaching is aimed at developing competences (metacognition, critical thinking etc.). Last but not least is the following question. Should the ES be prepared to provide a version of all the needed documents, including the subjects of the Bac examination's in another language, using a computer system in place? On a basic level, we know that the machine translation performs simple substitution of words in one language for words in another but that alone usually cannot produce a good translation of a text because recognition of whole phrases and their closest counterparts in the target language is needed.

6.2.2. Appeals

This year the number of appeals was much lower than in the previous year. Thanks to excellent preparation by the Baccalaureate Unit, it was relatively simple for me to make quick decisions on these appeals which, almost in all the cases, had no prospect of success because no procedural irregularities were apparent. Taking into account that lodging or dealing with an appeal is a huge work, consideration should be given as to how parents and not minor students can be better informed, i.e. by the schools, Interparents etc., about the legal basis of their appeals and the prospects of success (see for example the Complaints Board, law 15/40 that refers to a difference in the translation of two versions of a written examination). Parents need to be reassured that the exam papers really reflect the syllabi in full and that the necessary development of their contents are consistent both with the curricula and with developments in the subject matter.

The article 13 of the AIREB is clear about the possible reason to lodge an appeal. Most of the time, the interested parents and students request an upgraded mark, or they express doubts and concerns about the whole process etc. More preciously, for the written examination of Bac 2019 we have observed appeals concerning:

- The quality of the teaching methods of a teacher, when the students believe that their achievements throughout the year and in the Baccalaureate, did not accurately represent their level of knowledges in a subject, but are the result of the insufficiency of the teaching experience.
- the failure of the school to offer a solution and to implement appropriate corrective measures, when the parents ask it. I.e. errors in the written examinations of the Pre-bac, when the teacher clarified to the Deputy director of the school, that he/she introduced an exercise by error (apparently not foreseen by the syllabus). In fact, the teacher removed the wrong question from the final assessment and changed the grades in order to not impact negatively any student.
- The sending of an appeal, without a handwritten signature, but from the personal email of the students registered in SMS.

- The sending of an appeal from a mother instead of the interested student of legal age (she did not even put the student in copy of her email.
- The difference in marks between the first and the second corrector. That does not imply a procedural irregularity and additionally there is not an error that could be connected to this difference. We should consider that the principle of double correction of the examination scripts assures the reliability of marking. Differences in marking between the first and the second corrector are possible since they can be based on different interpretations of the pupil's performance and level of attainment, always within the instructions and guidelines issued for correction and marking by the inspectors.
- The personal assessment and a subjective perception of the parents. I.e. the parents announced that the questions were relatively more difficult this year than in the past, that there was an overload of documents, a word did not mention in the syllabus and was confusing etc. These complains would not affect the validity of the subject examination. It is the pedagogical freedom of the Inspector to produce an examination in line with the requirements of the Bac regulations.

For the oral examinations:

Taking into account that all articles defining the procedure for an oral examination were correctly applied by the school, here is a list of minor problems, that we encountered with the exam:

- The timing of the examinations. It should be mentioned that the article 6.5.2 does quote "(...) not exceed 25 minutes". Even if the timing had been shorter than the 25 minutes foreseen in the Regulations, this is a maximum timing. Not the minimum required".
- The frequent interruptions not attributable to the student, who because of this problem had not the possibility to present his own ideas. The required fair and equal treatment (see Article 6.5.3.1 sentence 3) was thus not guaranteed. The internal teacher confirmed that in no time both examiners addressed student in an unappropriated way. Should the event have happened, then it can be affirmed that it probably was out of the context, but even so, it certainly did not affect the grading of the oral examination. In addition, this did not even affect the students capacity to answer the oral examination or his performance.
- Doubts and concerns about the whole process and the correct procedure which should be followed in a subject. The oral European Baccalaureate examinations do not take the form of an oral presentation by the pupil, in front of a listening jury. It is an active verbal exchange between the pupil and the examiners, that takes a start with the questions drawn by the pupil before the preparation time. The teacher, having acted as a first oral examiner, confirmed that he had been training his class on this examination method on many occasions during the school year.

6.3. Inclusion (Special Arrangements)

During my visits at the ES during the period of the written and oral examinations, I paid special attention to search and after that to be sure that I did not detect any inconvenience, concerning the examinations based on the Special Arrangements and the use by the students of the permitted material. It was clear that the special guidelines were carefully implemented by the European Schools and that the special needs of each individual student are considered very well in the written and oral examinations. I am convinced that the implementation of inclusion measures in the European Schools, in comparison with the latest innovations in educational systems of many European Members -States is very satisfied. Many of these requests are in line with the Report on 'Inclusive Education in the European Schools' (Ref. 2018-09-D-28) and is crucial after the previous presidency to determine the approach to be followed and the decisions to be taken under and with the Spanish Presidency. Nevertheless, some measures might be analysed by other Working Groups that are competent in the area (e.g. IT-PEDA). However, I have noted some problematic aspects – some of which had also already been mentioned by my predecessors and the responsible Vice-Chairmen, too.

Several pedagogical practices are in use at the smaller ES for the students without linguistic section, SWALS, or students with special educational needs, etc. The SWALS risk experiencing fewer choices than other students, and their L1 language is not always considered sufficiently well during the assessment process. We recommend to maintain in large part the status quo regarding choice of languages of instruction, but concomitantly to examine and analyze the consequences of the current and planned requirements pertaining to the language(s) of instruction for SWALS as for students groups who have the same L1 or those who are studying in mixed language groups. By this way we will be sure that the ES' system is in place and efficient and that is really possible to support all the students as needed and in accordance with the demands of the modern world. Teaching and learning practices need to be changed, which tend to have a greater impact on student achievement than others. For example, according to the regulations of the ES for a SWALS pupil who enters the European Schools in year 6 there is the possibility at the time of his registration to ask and have 2 examination papers, one in his Language 1, the other in the language in which the course has been followed. But the real problem is that the SWALS students have not always the same opportunities to learn all the corresponding L1 courses, i.e. L1 Advanced, when most of the time the applicants are less than 7 students (in S6-S7 less than 5). Similarly, studies in SWALS education demonstrate that pedagogy plays a significant role and are needed not only cognitive approaches (Ref.: 2018-12-D-14-en-2 Orig.: FR Policy on Enrolment in the Brussels European Schools for the 2019-2020 school year). The ES have already developed and piloted language awareness initiatives.

We estimate that the implementation of the latest decision taken by the decision-making bodies of the European Schools, concerning the category III SWALS pupils is benefit for them. They have now access to their corresponding L1 courses subject (of course under conditions i.e. on the assumption that the School has at its disposal a duly qualified teacher or can recruit one). This change will allow to create a coherent Language policy in the ES for the SWALS, who will obtain the European Baccalaureate diploma through a language that the pupil knows or is being taught.

It is to be noted that schools for the SWALS teaching and learning very often organize group classes of the consecutive years (e.g. S6 and S7 SWALS courses grouped together) for staffing imperatives or for other budgetary considerations, which results in a lower total amount. It is highly and very recently recommended an evaluation of the teaching and learning conditions for LI for secondary students without a language section. The feedback from parents, teachers and inspectors concerning the application of both time reduction and regrouping in small and larger groups of consecutive classes was negative and leads to much discussion especially in the ES Munich. The issue has been discussed with the main stakeholder of the ES Munich, the European Patent Office, and as agreed, the school propose an evaluation. For the EPO, benchmarking is of major importance and therefore it would be very useful to compare the conditions in this school with those in other schools.

6.4. New Marking System

Articles 59 and 61 of the General Rules have been adapted accordingly, competence-based syllabuses had been designed and written in line with the new assessment system, with attainment descriptors. Implementation of the NMS (Decision of the Board of Governors from April 2015) had been supported by guidelines drafted with generic and subject-specific examples (including sample papers for the harmonised S5 exam). In order to exhaust the full potential of the NMS, as the NMS would come into force in the Baccalaureate cycle in September 2019 with its implementation in S6, some issues need to be thought through in order to avoid a lowering of standards when the first Baccalaureate would be held in 2021.

To this end, the National Authorities have been informed about the implications on tertiary education establishments in order to ensure fair and management of the transition to competence-based assessment, and about the roll out of the new marking scale in the secondary cycle. Moreover, in some schools, the representatives of the parents sent their reports indicating that: 1) the new marking scale is not being applied consistently or comprehensively, 2) there may still be misapprehensions on the part of many teachers about the relation between the old and new scales, and 3) many teachers have not yet successfully made the transition to the new assessment approach. It means, that for them the new approach needs updates to national equivalence tables and all the member states should put in place transitional measures for the first graduates under the new system; As next step the interested parents ask from the office of the Secretary General to keep them well informed, regarding the results of an analysis of the distribution of marks under the new system and from the ES management to take urgent measures for overseeing the process.

Finally, as requested, the BIS decided to begin to design Matrix, Marking grid, etc. as soon as possible, taken into account the deadline of early January to deliver the work and to present it in the Pedagogical meetings of February.

6.5. The Chairman of the Examination Board

During my visits to schools in May and in June, I had the opportunity to discuss with most of the ES Stakeholders. The discussion with some of them -after the proclamation ceremony of the Bac 2019- was very interest and very constructive. All of them have made remarks and proposals about needs for reform or at least for consider again with a view to changing certain regulations, practices or assessment criteria and support measures. On the basis of my research and the collection of relative information, I got sufficient and critical overview of the whole European School system and its examinations. Additionally, I understood why the syllabuses for the different subjects should meet the demands of modern, competence-based teaching and learning and why the already implemented University Observation of the written examination papers could also offer more organizational and qualitative measures in all subjects and/or for all the type of final and new online correction procedure. Looking back at my mandate as Chairman of the Examining Board and reflecting on my different up to now role, I realize that I would like to have been earlier and more involved in the activities of the various WG and the Baccalaureate Unit. As a result, I could gain more background knowledge and thus a deeper understanding of the ES examination system, of my duties as well as of the issues and problems which are currently under discussion. It would therefore be helpful if the name of the Chairman by the National Authorities of the Member States holding the chairmanship of the European Baccalaureate could be announced earlier (in September 2017 for the presidency 2018-2019). I would then be able to prepare myself, concerning my duties and to discuss with the national delegation which had the previous presidency. In collaboration with the Bac Unit and volunteers inspectors, I could find more time to organize all the meetings that I should attend and/or to make a well structured planning of my visits during the presidency and to focus better on the main aspects and needs which are needed to be clarified. This could be done without extra-cost, since the first year of his nomination the Chairman should organize meetings, clearly informative, by only electronic way.

Finally, after the 2018-2019 presidency, I would like to have a feedback of the possibly implementation or development of my suggestions in the ES system, taking into account that the best interest of the European Schools system is always the progress of students.

7. Accredited Schools

The increasing and rapid growth the recent years of the AES, very often locating near to traditional European Schools, it is necessary to agree on development priorities of this type of ES and then to communicate these priorities to all stakeholders, focusing for example on the following questions: How can the Accredited Schools be effectively supported in the recruitment of qualified staff? Do the teachers of this type of ES have the same opportunities for training and professional development, when i.e. the teachers of the Accredited Schools have not yet access to the SharePoint? What are the results when the status-quo of an Accredited school is changed as, for example, happen in the case of the European School (UK)? Is it necessary for the AES to maintain, and update, a forward planning document and if the answer is positive, how often? Do we make a meta-analysis of the Audits results and the data offered/received from the Management of each school? I think that a new framework is required, which could help the ES system on one hand to extend the number of the AES sector and on the other hand to ensure equivalence of education provided between the ES and the AES inside outside EU territory.

First of all, the teachers for practical and pedagogical and not optional reasons should have access to data, to Share point, knowing that the Accredited Schools are obliged to use the same technological tools, when offering the Baccalaureate. Secondly, because we should take care to improve the collaboration between teaching standards in the Accredited Schools and the traditional European Schools, if we want to ensure the monitoring of compliance with requirements. Last but not least, to clarify the role of the national inspections within the accreditation process and the time that each inspection needs to take place.

8. Summary and recommendations

Intended Outcomes and *Potential Benefits*

In the ES system for every interested member of the school community there is always the possibility to search and find useful data from previous presidencies, including the Annual Reports of the Chairmen of the European Baccalaureate Examining Board. For example, the Annual Report of the Secretary-General of the ES, the Annual Joint Reports of both the presidents/inspectors of BiS, BiP and JTC. There are also very useful reports, as the Annual report on European Baccalaureate compiled by Baccalaureate Unit, the Director's minutes of the European Baccalaureate session in their schools, the Complaints Board of the European Schools, the financial reports etc. I tried to read as much more possible of all these documents with the aim to analyze the arrangements that are in force in the system and to describe better the current situation. After one's year hard work and long discussions with my knowledgeable and effective collaborators, now it's time to propose some additional than previous years substantive proposals based as always on the ES Regulations. This goes a step further having an annual experience. I have judged whether the various Bac issues have been fulfilled or partially completed. I consider as a very useful tool the self-analysis of the Bac examinations for each ES by the schools' management, but also by all the other involved in this procedure persons. The following list of my concrete proposals and suggestions, I hope that the Stakeholders will find it useful for the future of the European Schools and for the implementation of all the new educational aspects of the EU.

1. Teachers of the European Schools have and gain in-depth pedagogical expertise even if they are trained to different degrees. Teachers familiarize themselves with new ideas, contents and procedures and gain experiment with these elements in their actual classrooms. They engage in processes of developing their continuous professional development and practices and at the same time they adapt,

refine and contribute to the refinement of the curriculum being implemented. They also reflect on their current teaching and professional practices (CPD) because they know that their dedication to develop their own teaching skills leads to improvement in students' learning and makes the European Schools a well-structured learning organization from different angles and perspectives. To support the actions which have been taken for the new syllabus's implementation in the ES, the Pedagogical Development Unit proposes an adaptable framework and examples, which can be consulted in the annexes to document 2018-09-D-28-en-2. The teachers themselves strongly support any useful and linked to their professional duties and personal "wellbeing" training. In each or in all the ES is possible to be organized de-centralized and centralized trainings by the school, the inspectors and/or in collaboration with the target Subject Referents (qualified and motivated members of the staff of each school) in order to support the implementation of the new syllabi. Of course, the management of each school can plan and organize with autonomy trainings that aim at local needs.

For me, expect the all above mentioned benefits of the trainings' procedure, very important is also that that the Direction of a school or a teacher can initiative these training activities that could target the local, individual and professional needs of the staff of the ES. Additionally, we do not forget that providing opportunities for all these trainings to the teachers they can and should be recorded in the teachers' personal file and be used during their evaluations. On the other hand, we need to be sure that this procedure pedagogically correct gives results and will be implemented as much as possible in the class. It means that the teachers, knowing what is expected of them, they can give personalized feedback and evaluate whether they gained experience from the training and in the completion of the prerrequisite task(s). Hence, teachers are competent to provide their students with statements and explanations about the intended aims and objectives in a lesson or series of lessons. At the conclusion, providing teachers with an overall assessment of their goal progress, motivating them to extend their efforts, to persist and to keep adjusting their competences and interests, they develop their own goals, regarding their personal and professional future.

According to the Regulations of the ES, the inspectors must give their opinions, concerning the qualification of each locally recruited teacher before his contract be signed by the Director. As have been noted, in some cases teacher's teaching experience does not clearly correspond to his academic training as well as is not under the umbrella of his national qualification framework. For example, an English native speaker teacher who is qualified to teach i.e. L2 or Sociology in English, is he also competent to teach L1 English in S6-S7? Especially for the recruitment of teachers by the Accredited schools, this clarification is very important. As conclusion, regular attendance at internal and external in-service training sessions and professional post-qualification should be compulsory and should be codified in an overall training and qualification plan.

2. Due to all these recently asked duties, many of teachers may have not reached their required grades for collaborative enquiry that has great transformative potential. It involves larger sections of the teaching force and enhances their capacity to deal with change and can hence be fruitfully transferred to other schools and between the different sections of the same school.

Problems related to non-inter-sections relations of the teachers or non-inter-schools exchanges could be easier resolved by the re-conceptualization of why and how new ideas and good practices should be implemented into the everyday school life.

As potential solutions could be: the sharing teaching material, publications that relate to specific relevant issues, such as the classroom management or student motivation, exchanging views of and experiences with pedagogic and cognitive strategies with colleagues. The teachers can observe lessons of their colleagues (two teachers in the classroom) and then to involve in the classroom methods as peer coaching, team teaching, self-evaluation, hetero-evaluation etc. By this way teachers are engaged in collaborative inquiry and are connected with the existing knowledge base and research either through professional or academic exchanges. I.e. through action research, sharing and publishing the generated knowledge so that it can inform practices in other schools and contribute to a pool of resources for all teachers involved.

As teachers adjust their practice, they are risking both disorder and less-than accomplished performance on the part of their students and themselves. Being a member of a community of teacher-learners engaged together in a change process provides the support teachers need to take such risks.

In order to meet the high quality standards of the European Schools, the Share Point provides a forum for supporting teachers in converting the curricular reform into 'lived' practices within their classrooms and their schools, which at the same time cultivates the social competences and human relationships. In other ways it helps and encourages the culture of sharing. The 'Continuous Professional Development' Working Group in order to cultivate an environment of mutual trust might develop a detailed draft and take immediate measures of such a plan at the school and inter-school level.

3. The vital 21st-century *digital competence* for **teachers** and students are targeted by several concrete measures in the ES. As **result of these** initiatives:

-A Digital Educational Vision was approved by the Board of Governors in April 2019 (DEVES)

-The CPD Framework has been amended with trainings concerning teachers' digital competences and the use of ICT in teaching and learning

-Schools are expected to plan digital training measures for the coming school year and they are requested to give the Office of the Secretary General feedback on their planning

-The ES Digital Competence Framework will be set up, in line with the European Commission's DigComp. Syllabuses will be amended by annexes (to help teachers find/design/use appropriate activities that make use of and develop the digital competences and enhance cooperative and interactive teaching methodology).

-A Pedagogical Sharepoint have been put in place to share good practices and encourage the culture of sharing i.e. Teams <https://teams.microsoft.com> and of respecting the other i.e. see general and didactic objectives of differentiation (that is a rational approach to meeting the needs of individual learners). Even if some ES have used the "Pedagogical Days" to approach differentiation, the training of teachers is still necessary.

In other words, the digital competence give us an understanding of what behaviors and knowledges we should cultivate at the workplace and why and how these should be valued and rewarded. It is recommended for every ES to have a proper DG model and plan or a framework based on their organizational needs. In this way, the focus on the continuity of these efforts become an individual or professional issue as well as a collective, organizational issue. Which serves as a baseline for training/learning goals and future performance evaluations and does not took place in a moment but has continuity.

4. The syllabi concerning the European Higher Education should:

i) ensure that they correspond with later expectations of universities and colleges. The subjects available to students, and their related content, should map closely enough to contemporary degree subjects on offer within Higher Education contexts throughout Europe. For example, the syllabi of Math and Sciences, which will be implemented in S6 as for 2020-21 and in S7 for 2021-22 are based on these needs.

We therefore need to consider how a series of pathways might look that offer enough coherence, relevance and breadth, whilst still being manageable administratively, and allowing smooth transitions to higher education. For example, what will be the impact of the Brexit? How it could affect the higher education sector? We need a briefing outlining what the Universities must do to provide greater short- to medium-term stability and minimize the risk of a damaging 'cliff-edge' scenario. We know that in many countries the Universities are autonomous, so they are free to make their own rules and procedures i.e. they ask *an official provisional examination certificate*. It means that the graduates of each Accredited School must follow different application process.

We should ensure the credibility of the European Baccalaureate (taking into account the implementation of the New Marking System), monitoring over time the introduction and institutionalization of every new arrangement. The new educational aspects concerning the quality

assurance, the inclusion etc. are relevant to study at higher education level, too. Many suggestions could and need to be proposed by the ES in the area of subjects' coherence and of cross curricular approaches

ii) Moving forwards, it is possible to conceive of a series of educational pathways for students at the European Schools that allows a limited degree of specialization at upper secondary levels at S6-S7, promoting coherence of study and provision of subject teaching across all schools. Allowing choices indicates a degree of early specialization, which students may regret later. I think that is better to be concentrated on the 'big ideas' rather than excessive detail (see UCL report, ISBN 978-3-319-71463-9 ISBN 978-3-319-71464-6 (eBook) <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71464-6>)

iii) Secondary vocational and technical education and training. As very recently has been discussed we should think the students who they can not to obtain the European Baccalaureate diploma. These students need courses that are differ in their length, may options which permit the continuation of their education on the basis of some vocational standards for a specific profession. In some national educational systems, pupils can acquire vocational qualifications through alternative means insight/outside the formal school system. The objectives of this educational proposal are to develop key competences, skills and vocational qualifications at an internationally comparable level and to provide knowledge and skills for employment, further education and lifelong learning. All courses should include general education for continuous personal development etc. Every vocational or technical course/subject must also contain subjects aimed at the development of communication skills and the development of knowledge and awareness. The pupils have possibilities for learning about national identity, one's own cultural tradition as well as other cultures and civilizations, the development of talents and training for artistic expression and perception of arts etc.

In this field, another central initiative is to support pupils' learning to learn competences (*via Careers Guidance activities, in order to offer pupils professional guidance on their choice of subjects and on career/university decisions in the later years of the secondary school*). If we really want to provide a broad education of high quality, from nursery level to university-entrance *we should develop high standards in L1 and foreign languages taught in ES (see Language policy) as well as in Mathematics-Sciences as well as in the study of the human sciences. We must: encourage creativity in music and the plastic arts and an appreciation of all that is best in a common European artistic heritage; develop physical skills and instill in pupils an appreciation of the need for healthy living through participation in sporting and recreational activities. In particular in secondary cycle, the philosophy of the current proposed and approved curricula (compulsory courses) requires to adapt the studies on the students' interests faced with the demands of the modern world.*

iv) *Offer more possibilities, in a variety of ways, to the students of S6-S7 to use successfully the self-evaluation mechanism which involves several processes. For example, providing a description with the student's knowledge, current capability, competences etc., which at first allows the identification of weaknesses in the student's capacities and as a second step the amelioration of these weaknesses by reflection on the means for improving. The students must have the opportunity to articulate the quantitated in relation to the qualitative results, in other words to have a written and contextualized indication of their performance, specifying weaknesses, impediments and successes in relation to the achievement of their expected progress. They could use for example a portfolio and/or a toolkit intended to help students assess their progress and to set priorities for improvement.*

5. Inclusive education:

We know that there is an increasing number of students who need EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT and many measures have been taken to facilitate the reception and the implementation of these pupils in the European Schools (Doc: 2018-09-D-53-en-3). Each school respects the Regulations and the budget of the ES' and makes efforts to find solutions, when for particular/optional subjects and especially at the Bac cycle the number of students is less than five. On the other hand, parents and students complain about the forms of discriminatory groupings, such as multi-age, multi-grade, arrangements or reduced course hours. They believe that the pupils are confronted with choices between disparate

sets of options, within this and even then, may not be given their first choices and thus must settle for subjects which they did not choose.

If the students want to study a subject, that last moment is limiting or eliminating it would restrict both the principle of choice and diminish the possibilities for learning implied by offering choice to students. Additionally, students are more motivated in their studies, if they have some choice in what they study i.e. L1 Advanced, Ancient Greek, Latin or other compulsory courses etc. Offering subjects with grouping or reduced course hours and much worst removing some optional courses at different levels the quality of teaching and learning may affect and distort progression at the individual subject level. We know that in some ES especially in primary have been created satellite classes.

New satellite classes for other subjects may possibly be created in the future, too.

Taking also into account that the mobility of the parents into the ES is a very important issue, which at the beginning of the School year would enable the school to fulfil its requirement for many subject's tuition. We believe that the mobility is a minor problem in the Baccalaureate cycle. As it is estimated only 10% of the total number of the endangered L1 groups are likely to be affected by mobility. If parents are transferred from one location to another and consequently, they would need to enroll their children in another European School, they tend to leave their children in the school where he/she has started the Baccalaureate Cycle, rather than change the school environment.

We are in favor of a model of teaching and learning which can be characterized as a scaffolding process with a focus on learning outcomes and curriculum standards. This is particularly noticeable that the scaffold is provided to the learner by the teacher in their capacity as 'expert' in relation to the satisfactory completion of Students' Progression. In other words, we believe that

it should be a temporary support, offered to the learner in relation to specific tasks that being derived from the learning outcomes and taking into account the Bloom's taxonomy of the kinds of cognitive processes often asked of students in educational settings (i.e. cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/).

In parallel, the conscience and convictions of individuals shall be respected.

I heard about the intention of some pioneer schools to set up communities of practice of differentiation and I was very interested in this idea. *More schools and many teachers could cooperate in the development of a training program on differentiation implemented through the development of communities of practice and focused on actual practices. As a response to the demand of training on differentiation, which gives beneficial effects in didactic and pedagogical fields, i.e. cultivate pupil's personal, social and academic development. The management and the teachers of each ES should take initiatives to organize these trainings and take place instead in a specific moment in the school year, continuously.*

9. Bac Examinations

A. (Written examinations and their improvement)

In the vast majority of cases the written examinations in the ES system of last years, including this school year, were very well organized. On the other hand, it showed evidence of some not totally successful aspects – some of which had also already been also mentioned by my predecessors and the Vice-Chairmen, that it may be helpful to exam and test them in order to see if there are fields of improvement. This list bellow of suggestions can obviously be amplified and adapted according to needs that may arise in the process, including the Bac in 2021, S6 in 2020 results or the S5 results in a given year, based on the New Marking system. These data will be provided from the Office of the Secretary General to the members states to see the distribution of marks. In addition, the Guidelines dealing with frequently asked questions will updated for example to the website of the schools.

Taking into account that there are a lot of positive aspects and several ways to improve the written and oral examinations of European Baccalaureate, I will note the following comments and recommendations which in no way be taken as criticism but should be intended as suggestions for further improvement.

PRE BAC

A) There are opinions in favor or against the proposal to abolish the Pre-Baccalaureate examinations and that should be subject to a following research: What do we really need? If we insist on the Harmonization of regular progress assessment throughout the school year at the school level, this could be achieved by:

-maintaining and establishing a number of regular progress tests for each subject as well as common test and matrixes and not only of the Pre-Bac examination in January,

-reconsidering the weight of the preliminary mark including the multidisciplinary project. Place for this project should be made in the curriculum with allocation of several teaching hours. Probably this issue should be tackled in the frame of the wider curriculum, using the common framework and the structure for all syllabuses in the system of the European schools under the responsibility of one or more inspectors with the assistance of some experts. An assessment mode should be also decided upon. Either written, oral or both. Place and weight in the assessment structure should be figured out. Particularly, I would include this as part only of the S6 mark and should be assessed by the teacher or teachers in charge of each project as an individual work, as team work/performance or both. In other words, the students will be evaluated only in S6 for one or two projects. In this case, the inter-disciplinary project will be a compulsory subject.

-abolishing in S7 the 2 weeks of written Pre-Bac examinations taking into account that the teachers who are teaching in particular in S7 very often complain that they have not enough time to finalize their work and they need extra time teaching periods i.e. abolishing the Pre-Bac examinations the ES could provide two more teaching weeks. The Board of Governors should reconsider the status and form of the

B) Further development of the Pre-Bac by:

-organising the final written and oral examinations earlier

-establishing a common period for the May holidays in all the European Schools and delivering the European Baccalaureate Diplomas earlier (mid-June) in order to gain time and to facilitate the "bachelier" to apply to the higher education institutions their registration without any further delay,

-having the candidates the possibility to sit less written and oral examinations,

-Internal second marking and a mandatory correction and marking system might enhance the objectivity and validity of the B marks, without its percentage share of the final mark necessarily having to be reduced, i.e. by replacing the B Tests at the end of S6 with an objectified Pre-Bac.

As result, the instructions, attainment descriptors and criteria of the assessment of this project should be produced and established accompanied also by adequate in-service training of the teachers.

The additional burden of work of inspectors and the losing time from control mechanisms in the examination, like the inspection of formal aspects of written Pre-Bac exams in S7 and the repeats of almost identical exams twice per year, about which teaching staff complain, might be avoided. In conclusion, knowing that the students need to be prepared and for the final examinations when we discuss the possibility of abolishing the Pre-Bac it does not mean that we do not like the idea to organize sessions and to prepare the necessary for the examination material which will be uploaded on the website of each school, describing the Bac examination rules, problems, changes, etc. We can organize preliminary examination for all students. This enable students to see how this type of examination looks like and how they should prepare for it.

Before to start the pre-selection of the Bac questions, the Board of Governors, as well as other competent committees, need to devise and implement measures to ensure at least one qualified inspector in each subject. New forms of assessment need to be developed in connection to revised syllabi and the new marking system could include measures such as project work which will be assessed by both internally and/or externally evaluation process. The objectivity of the B marks could also be increased by internal second marking.

-The BAC unit should, on specific points, continue and reinforce its efforts of communicating the regulations surrounding the Baccalaureate, especially to teachers and external examiners, (codes, instructions) in order to ensure that rules are known and followed by those who should apply them.

Some supplementary regulations may prevent irregularities, when it comes to collecting students' papers in the examination room or when the questions of a written examination ask to write and sign a letter, should be also notify that is not allowed to the students to write/note their personal data as well as there is a risk on data protection, which might have no meaning from a statistical point of view, but creates the possibility to give a « name » to pupil's results or to teacher's marking

-The inspectors' presence at written exams should be enforced and focused on their own subject.

-It is neither necessary nor desirable that the students' own teachers take part in the correction of their own student's exam papers. The most important thing is that the digitalization now enables new possibilities such as anonymized correction.

-In terms of content many examinations were dominated by the mere reproduction of knowledge. The application of knowledge, interconnecting different areas of knowledge, using subject-specific methods for solving problems, or the criteria-based assessment of more complex issues were not very often used.

-Some subject-specific instructions or assessment sheets should be revised to make them more precise. I am sure that next year more attention will be note to this or other relevant aspects of the design and conduct of new examinations, according to the new Marking Scale System and the assessment of the key competences. Introduction of a uniform and compulsory system of correction notes increases the transparency and comparability of the assessment and thus the validity of the internal and external marks.

- Sometimes the first correctors send their remarks independently, but for many reasons, I suggest to the subject coordinators to collect all remarks from the first correctors and compile a report, using this remark form, which will be transmitted to the school management as requested by the Bac Unit.

-Parents should be better informed about the objectives and forms of competence-based teaching, as well as the prospects of success of complaints and appeals against the Baccalaureate.

-The European Schools confirmed in December 2018 (2018-10-D-65-en-2) the accreditation of the ESUK until August 2019 (thus secured the BAC 2019) and to work on a solution for the BAC 2020. The fact that the S5 year group was not considered in these discussions, increases the anxiety of parents and students, so that they need to be assured of their preferred education path. The outcome of the consultation process and its consequences for the ES system would be communicated.

*The **short-term** questions/proposals for improvements*

-How correction of written exams are randomly distributed in among correctors?

-How, why and to which exams moderation is applied?

*The **longer-term** proposals for improvements?*

-Which is the role and the profile of the "experienced correctors"?

-How printing "enveloping" and "shipping" of exams could be organized?

-What is the possible service level agreements with "correction center"?

- Are the several agreements adequate for the AES?

-How could we prepare less expensive and more efficient and save the preparation of the examinations?

There are many successful methods and measures in the Bac examinations that is not necessary to be changed. For example, to:

-overviews the Bac procedure in each school/examination center by the Bac Unit (Office of the Secretary General) providing support and guidelines to implement the examinations in schools and directives for necessary activities

-ask the support of each ES, examination center, which is involved in this procedure

-check the applies of the students if they fulfill requirements to sit the BAC examinations by each ES

-offer to the candidates the possibility to elect, except the subjects of L1, L2, and Mathematics that are compulsory, other subjects in among of the total many different but very interesting subjects.

-use the digitalization (i.e. Viatique process, using special algorithm) and the measure of the anonymous scripts

We could introduce in the Quality Assurance process of the Bacculaureate examinations, some new ideas, without having to reinvent the whole procedure. These practices might well inspire improvements that the WG might be willing to propose to the Board of inspectors first and to the Board of Governors then.

-For each subject there is a committee of the responsible inspector, who collaborates with one or more “experienced” Corrector (s) [Chief examiner, expert examiners], examiners/correctors and the new external correctors (who are may are experienced in the ES system and teachers who are not, but they are qualified, according to the national legislation and the approved regulations of the ES).

The role of the Experienced Corrector, if the responsible inspector agrees on it, could be in among others:

-ask all new correctors in the system to correct 2 examinations, according to given criteria and then evaluate the result and give advices, when needed. This process will be conducted well in advance to the real correction of exams

-Check the correction of seeding exams (which are the same for all correctors. The correctors do not know which of them are not correct and contain typical mistakes).

-Intervene when a tolerance gap would be overcome (standardization)

-Call upon the attention of responsible people, when the performance of a corrector too often deviate from the normal

-Offer the necessary training to the correctors

- Take care for the formulation of Questions „in house“. For example, amongst other things, the validity of the examination results clearly depends on whether the written and oral examination questions are technically correct and methodologically and didactically appropriate.

*- To ensure security all the involved in the pre-selection persons is under strict control for each page of each subject (all of them have a personal code), all the electronic marking tests are scanned and there is a **hierarchy of examiners** (chain of responsibility).*

Distribution of the subjects’ papers

-The examination center in each school prints directly all copies of the subject’s papers and puts them in groups in sealed envelopes. The whole process is automatized, each page of each paper has a unique QR code. Or

- We pack written papers directly from printing machine in the special (security) plastic bags.
- In each plastic bag there are only 5 written papers for each subject.
- Each plastic bag has its own code.
- All security plastic bags are computer scanned in data base.
- The bags are closed/glued under camera, so that nobody can open them without leaving trace.
- All security plastic bags are waiting for delivery to schools in special boxes which are sealed.
- Access to premises is restricted, permissions updated regularly

-The sealed envelopes are then made available for each examination and envelopes are opened before the candidates

✓ *How correction of written exams are randomly distributed in among correctors?*

When the exam is divided in parts, different parts can be given to be corrected to different correctors.

Each corrector receives i.e. 20 exams to be corrected, in among which 3 are seeding copies selected by the Committee of experts (inspector and experienced correctors).

✓ *Moderation*

For some subject, where marking is close guided i.e. scientific subjects, a moderation process is conducted before the announcement of the public results. Results of all candidates are observed and,

when needed, thresholds are adapted in order to guaranteed that the examination is fair, year after year. This process is conducted by the Committee of experts, guided by an expert in data analysis. In other words, a statistician receives and gives detailed graphs by each individual question year by year, gaining the necessary moderation overall and offering stable results, which the Universities I have the certitude that will appreciate very much and will join efforts in their territory.

In other words we can organize an examination system which needs inspectors, experts, technical and administrative, **subject testing Committees** which creates items, scoring instructions, receive the feedback from the EC etc. and **advisory services** for comparison of educational achievement, quality and effectiveness in education and for research and researchers in that field. We can use and update all these useful databases regularly for improving education, using evidence-based and theory-driven approach.

B. (Oral examinations and their improvement)

The students had enough time to start and finish their presentation, without the student being interrupted by the correctors. In some cases, the examination time was not used in full and the examiners, in order to keep the time schedule, asked some relevant questions. Both the internal and external examiners had equal status and they had been informed concerning the procedure before the oral examinations start. Although I did not notice any serious problems in the schools that I visited, as I mentioned above, the Bac Unit received some appeals concerning the interactive dialogue between the candidate and the examiners. *The method of the simultaneous assessment of two candidates is not yet an integral part of the European Baccalaureate I believe that the use of the Audio-recorded method, which also is not yet involved, could be benefit in order to foster the transparency throughout the school community and beyond;*

Assessments of students' performances were made in general – immediately after the examination. The assessment had been based on objective criteria and was not relative to the performance of other students. The examiners should be reminded of the most important provisions and aspects at meetings prior to the oral examinations (e.g. by a member of the school management team or by an Inspector). As already mentioned in the context of the written examinations, *the objectivity and validity of the oral examinations might be enhanced if each examination question were supplemented by an outline of the expected student performance ('suggested answers'). Such an outline should also include information about the competence requirements of each question or sub-question, stating clearly the standard of attainment which the questions aim at reaching. The oral examination would consist of the presentation and further discussion of the results of the project.*

10. Personal Conclusions

While I have strived to argue and explain the following recommendations in more detail above, I will now provide a quick overview of the recommendations, which I have formulated on the basis of my duties and my responsibilities as Chair of the 2019 Baccalaureate Examining Board:

It is evident that taking into account my own observations, research and numerous discussions with many stakeholders, who were involved in the Pre-Bac and final examinations, I can report that the efforts made since last years to ensure the continuous development of the Pre-Bac and the European Baccalaureate were fruitful. The recommendations by the previous Chairmen, see "FOLLOW-UP ON RECENT REPORTS OF THE CHAIRMEN OF THE EUROPEAN BACCALAUREATE EXAMINING BOARD (2008-2016), provide impressive evidence of how carefully the General Secretariat, the Baccalaureate Unit and the various committees have dealt with these remarks and how consistently the measures regarded as necessary have been implemented. In conclusion, I found that the 2019 European Baccalaureate session went off very successfully. I did not observe any serious or systematic violations of the regulations, nor were any reported to me. It was the third year of the introduction of the new online correction procedure by Viatique -platform and has been judged to be a great success by

everyone involved in this procedure. I think that this experience, concerning the digitation of this complex educational system as the ES incarnate, is one of the greatest challenges in Europe and can also influence many Member-States. *The ES build a learning organization unique all over the world, which takes care of the planned actions to be conducted in parallel with the development of Europe, overcoming differences, prejudices and stereotypes. A cross curricular competence will be developed through the activities who have been or will be taken by the ES and we hope that will be assessed as such.*

The bac examinations finally foster the unity of the school and encourage the inter-disciplinary approaches, giving emphasis not only in Mathematics and Sciences but on the learning, understanding and use of L1 and foreign languages, art, etc. Courses are provided at an internationally comparable level and enable participants' involvement in the European labour market. The approach between the notion of 'European schooling', as developed by the European Schools, and the educational policy of the European Union can be summarized as follows *"Present students with the same offer of courses for all the European Schools and Accredited Schools and bring together in a single document information which is currently to be found in various places"*.

The new common structure in terms of pedagogy emphasizes the will to connect the European Schools with the educational policy of the European Union. Such a change means de facto that European Schools are the first educational system across Europe to structure their curriculum in terms of the guidelines and the non-binding framework adopted at the European level. Measuring communicative impacts for nursery, primary and secondary schools, we recognize that the ES have gain the reputation for quality as well as the actual quality, which is also important, of an educational institution. Students depending on their course, interests, dreams for future career goals and good performance have the possibility to continue their studies in higher Education Institutions. What is relevant to note here is that all this specific educational structure is not always well-known by the European citizens and by all the Member States. The impact is difficult to be valued or measured today especially in longer-term costs. In this context, remains a challenging question that has been brought to our attention. How the ES system could be more visible all over the world. The ES developed a common vision on teaching and learning and continue to work on the implementation of this vision.

In short, some of new ideas and recently changes-catalysts of the ES could be more powerful than others, or at least have the potential to be more powerful including the accredited schools that are independently managed, but the staff should participate to the procedure of the Bac exams as internal and external evaluators. Currently, the accredited schools' teachers do not have access directly with the Bac Unit. But they have the opportunity by trainings to meet their colleagues and to have the possibility to exchange their ideas. The ES is recommended to continue developing the process of a cyclical structure of quality assurance. Special arrangements and extra measures may need to be made and taken to ensure that the teachers of these schools do not miss out on such new opportunities *to provide Education for Sustainable Development with a cross curriculum approach in line with European and international documents.*

All new **syllabuses** are competence-based, therefore they all refer to the use of the Key Competences, while each syllabus contains **Attainment Descriptors**, which are used for assessment purposes. In addition to all the above described areas, pedagogical reform is aiming to strengthen other cross-curricular aspects, such as entrepreneurship (similarly, building on the experiences learnt from the EC EntrComp framework). The development of key competences is often facilitated by the provision of context from other disciplines. For example, teaching science in the context of the arts, humanities and social sciences is recognised as an important learning aid. This is known as STE(A)M approach to STEM education. Similarly, the infusion of Science and Maths into the learning of non-STEM disciplines could strengthen key-competence development in those disciplines. Another example is the Content and language integrated learning (CLIL). Participants will discuss innovative initiatives that have the potential to increase achievements in Key Competences, barriers for their implementations and ways to further up-scale them in different contexts. Cooperation amongst teachers is one of the key features of the Whole School Approach, which aims at creating inclusive

learning environments that foster competence development for all learners. *Considering that measures are taken by the European Commission to develop key competences and digital skills, it appeared that the "IT Strategy Group" should define as a priority a Digital Education Vision for the European Schools (DEVES). This priority was placed as objective n°1 (Operational objective) with absolute priority in the IT Multi-annual Plan.*

It was an extraordinary experience to get to know the European Schools more intimately. Their intercultural and multilingual atmosphere made a deep impression on me. It fascinated me to see how naturally and effortlessly students and teachers switched from one language to another and how smoothly the Stakeholders from different cultural backgrounds and education systems cooperated. At the Accredited Schools motivated persons, showing great personal commitment and pedagogical ethos, share and cultivate the common belief in the success of the European idea. *Particular emphasis should be placed on cultivating and embedding innovative teaching and learning. Nevertheless, more significant efforts must be made in some areas such as teacher training and support for schools' digital pedagogical practices to become better 'connected schools' and more visible. The quality of teaching and the competences of the teaching staff have a significant impact not only on the students' acquisition of competences, but also on the quality of the final examinations and as it is reasonable of the Bac results. It is a measure, in order, on the one hand, to give advice to the teachers and on the other, to form an up-to-date picture of the quality of teaching in all the European Schools (including the Accredited Schools). Utilizing the different forms of survey (one for the management, one for the teachers, another for the Inspectors) appropriate measures must be planned and implemented within the framework of in-service teacher training and the professional development. Such agreement is something we would like to request for future year educational progress.*

Every country can learn from the experiences of others. However, what works in one country won't necessarily work in another country; it needs to be adapted to fit a new environment. The changes proposed above of the ES can be regarded as exemplary, covering many aspects of the European higher education system. While some are straightforward, others will be challenging. Those related to decision making are particularly complex. However, the universities that have been successful in generating external research funding, as well as the ES, have created the basis on which to build the proposed development.

The European Schools need a foundational document to declare its objectives and to help all its stakeholders to make decisions and achieve together a set of goals. A vision is the proper way to go in this direction, to coordinate efficient actions in any interested area and must be considered as a long-term framework. A range of concrete measures should be developed and prioritised soon to fulfil its aims. These measures will be based on, among other things, the needs from the actors of the system (students, teachers, schools...) and accompanied by a budgeting for implementation (financial and human resources, new technologies etc.).

I seize the occasion to wish all the best for the future of the ES and to thank you for your help, cheerfulness and permanent positive spirit during the years I have had the privilege to work with you.

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Appendix 1

Andreas D. Fotopoulos, C.V.

Andreas D. Fotopoulos is Professor of Nuclear Medicine at the Department of Medicine, University of Ioannina. He has a long teaching activity at an undergraduate and a postgraduate level since 1995. His research work is internationally recognized, he is the author of more than 200 publications in international journals and conferences, 133 of which have been published in international peer review magazines and 17 have won Awards. He has supervised a significant number of diplomatic, postgraduate and doctoral dissertations. He has participated in several international conferences, some of which as guest researcher, as well as in the scientific and organize committee of international conferences. He has received a significant number of citations and has been reviewer in many international scientific journals.

For the past 15 years his research work has focused on the use of SPECT in Neuro-Oncology, creating a new field of applications of classical Nuclear Medicine, for the characterization of intracranial space-occupying lesions. The European Commission, within the frames of Horizon 2020-SME-Instrument-Phase 2 (PHC-12), has approved in 2015 the project "GLIOMARK" under the title «Exploratory phase II study in patients after treatment of high-grade brain tumors to assess the technical performance of Tc-99m Tetrofosmin for differentiation of recurrence versus radiation necrosis» and authorized funding of €4.7 million for the next 4 years.

Prof Andreas Fotopoulos has an extensive administrative experience including:

Hospital: Since 2002 he has been Chairman of the Nuclear Medicine Department of the University of Ioannina.

Executive Deputy Director & Board Vice President of University General Hospital of Ioannina

(Beds capacity: >800 and >2.000 staff members) for 2 years and 8 months (2011-2013).

University: From 2014 until 2018 he has served as Vice Rector of Academic Affairs & Human Resources of the University of Ioannina (Capacity: >25.000 students and >1000 staff members). He was also President of the following Committees of the University of Ioannina, namely Postgraduate Studies Committee, Ethics Committee, Committee of Culture, Committee for students with disabilities, Committee of Museums and Cultural Heritage, Internal Regulations Committee, Director of the Lifelong Learning Center and Academic Coordinator for ERASMUS+ of the University of Ioannina.

He also served as President of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ioannina (09/2013-11/2014).

National Level: For 10 years (2008-2018) he has been Board President of the Hellenic Society of Nuclear Medicine & Molecular Imaging. He is also President of the Committee of Ionizing and Non-Ionizing Radiation of the Ministry of Health, President of the Scientific Council for Approvals of the National Organization for Medicines, President of the Examination Committee for Medical Specialty of Nuclear Medicine (Athens), Coordinator of the Working Group on Postgraduate Medical Education in Nuclear Medicine of the Central Health Council and Board Member of Greek Atomic Energy Commission.

European Level: Since 2016 he has been Clinical Coordinator of the European Research Program (HORIZON 2020, Phase II) in the field of Health (Nuclear Medicine). Multicentre study in several European countries for 4 years (2016-2020)

He is President of the European Baccalaureate Examining Board of European Schools. (Brussels 2018-2019)

Languages:
English (fluent)
Italian (fluent)
French (excellent command)
Greek (native language)

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