General Meeting 19 Sept 2006

European Schools

Should we accept the proposal of the Belgian Authorities regarding the site of the transitory school ?

Berkendael : yes or no?

The problem

- The three Schools of Brussels are overcrowded : we are now reaching the physical upper limit
- The fourth School in Laeken, due to be open in 2009, will probably be only available by 2010 or even 2011 (despite repeated reassurances from the Federal Government)
- In the meantime, the only solution is to have a transitory site ready for Sept 2007

Needs in figures

not sustainable

écoles européennes de Bruxelles	*Capacité d'accueil nominale*	*Capacité physique maximale*	*Elèves en 2005/06*	*Effectifs en 2006/07*	*Prévision d'effectifs en 2009/10*
Uccle	2.500	3.100	2.611	3.080	3.660
Woluwe	2.400	3.000	3.056	2.951	3.489
Ixelles	2.400	2.800	2.820	2.680	3.190
TOTAL	**7.300**	**8.900**	**8.487**	**8.711**	**10.339**
Sureffectif en %	de la capacité nominale		116,26	119,33	141,63

A conservative estimate is that we need **1500 places** during the interim period. However, forecasting realistic trends is difficult, as many parents, disgusted by the appalling condition of the Schools, choose to send their children in other schools.

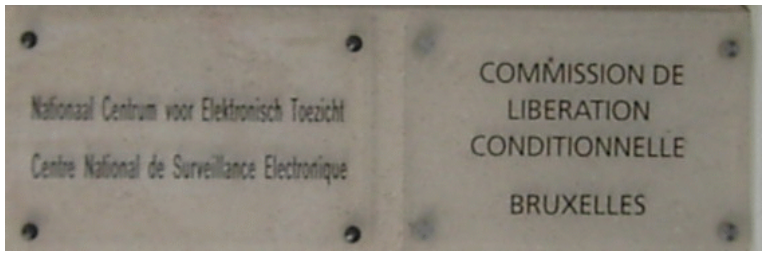
History

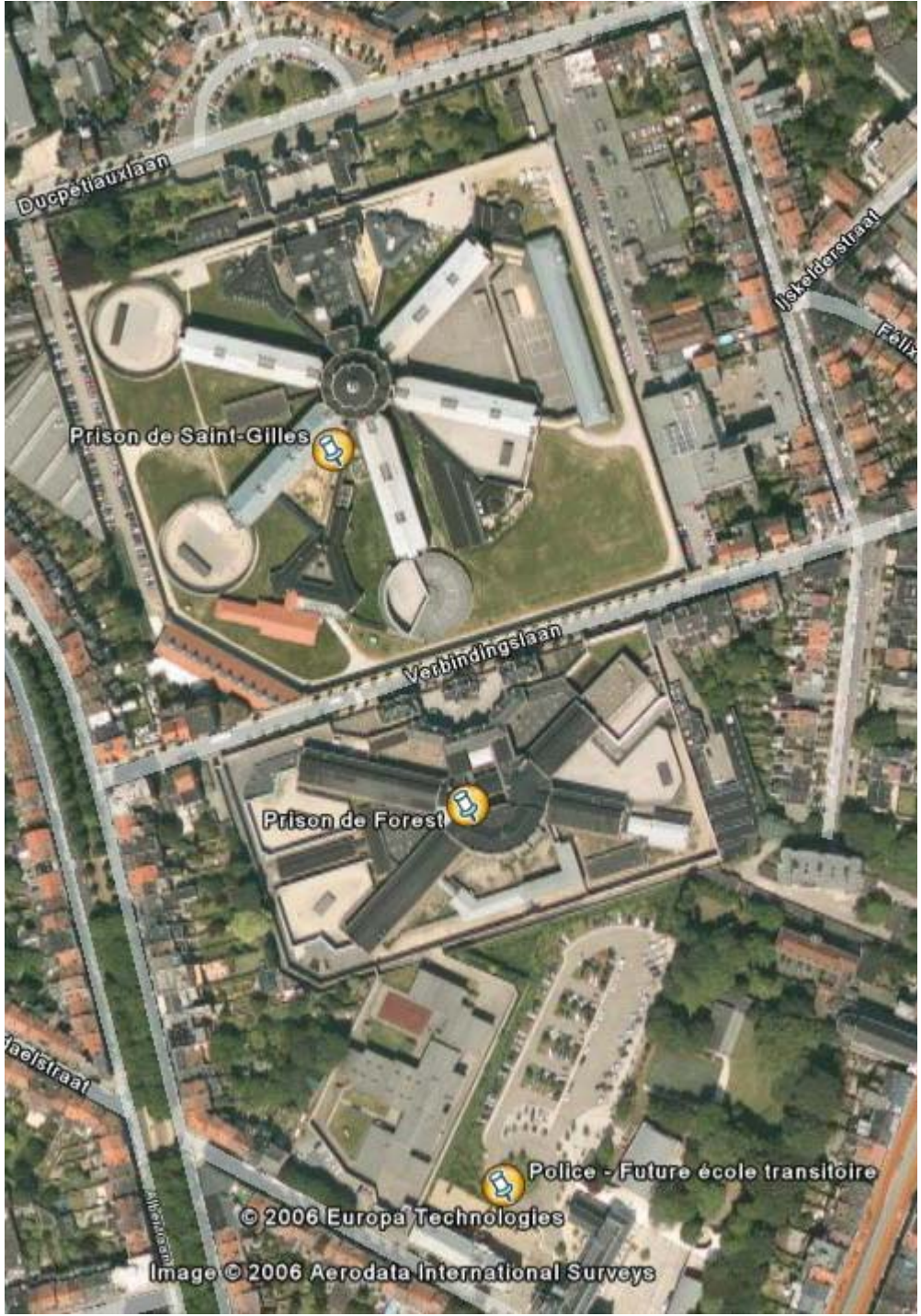
- Berkendael was already proposed as a transitory school before the opening of Ixelles
- Parents rejected this proposal as unsuitable, during a General Meeting in Jan. 1997
- The Board of Governors rejected the proposal in 1999

Why was Berkendael turned down ?

- Not enough capacity (750 pupils but no kindergarten possible without deep transformations)
- Plot of land of 1,5 Ha only !
- Access very difficult for buses
- Unsuitable kitchen facilities (only a warm point for prepared food)
- Close to a prison (security problems)
- Unmanageable pedagogical situation if seen as an annex to Uccle

How close to the prison ?





The new Belgian proposal

- The BoG asked for two options, for the site of a provisional school, reasonably close to Laeken
- Belgium offered three : 750 pupils
  - Berkendael à partir de septembre 2007, modules préfabriqués sur le site d'une école européenne existante de septembre 2008 à septembre 2009
  - Berkendael à partir de septembre 2007, modules préfabriqués sur le site de cette même école de septembre 2008 à septembre 2009
  - Berkendael à partir de septembre 2007, aménagement du bâtiment « Berkendael 66 » pour accueillir des élèves supplémentaires en septembre 2008

200

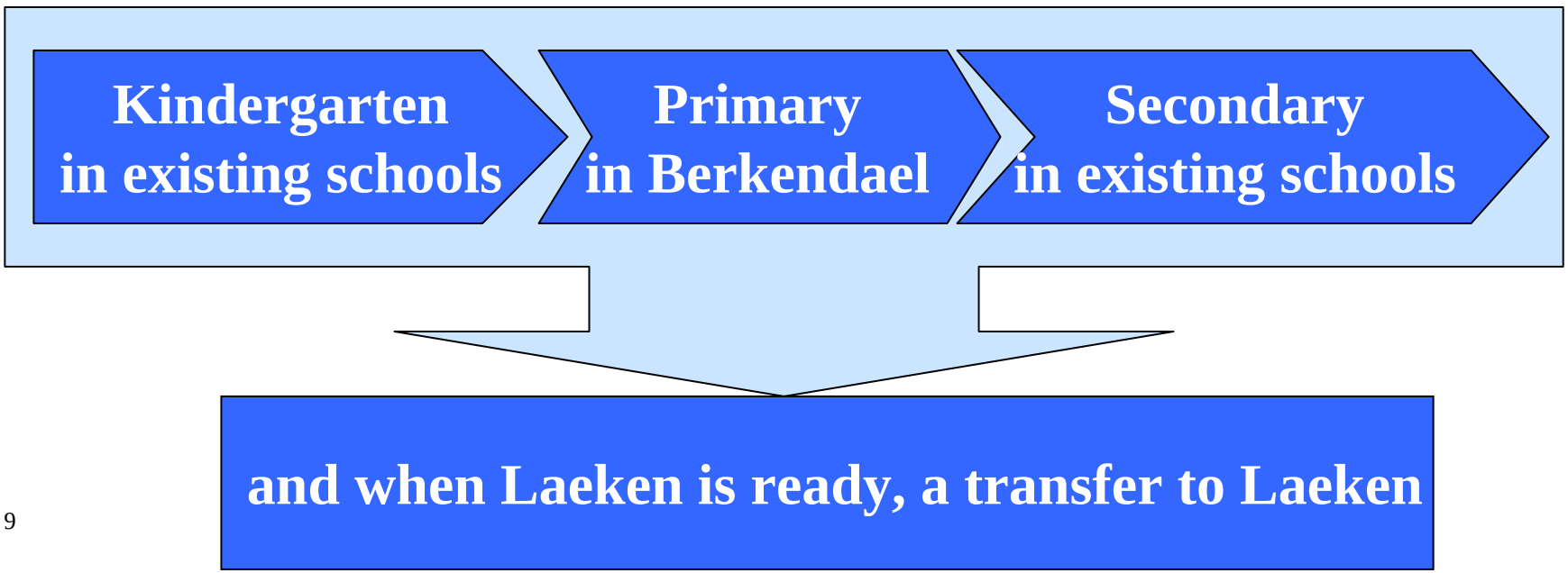
250

Weaknesses of the proposal (1)

- In reality, only one site is proposed, in full knowledge of the fact it has already been considered as unsuitable.
- The schools have already indicated that prefabs on their site is not feasible (options 1 & 2)
- Berkendael is not suitable for kindergarten.
  However, Belgium is considering adapting the premises to this purpose
- No nursery –garderie- or afterschool activities possible
- Berkendael as an annex of Uccle is contrary to the decision of the BoG stating that '*the transitory site which will be proposed is already considered as part of B IV*'

Weaknesses of the proposal (2)

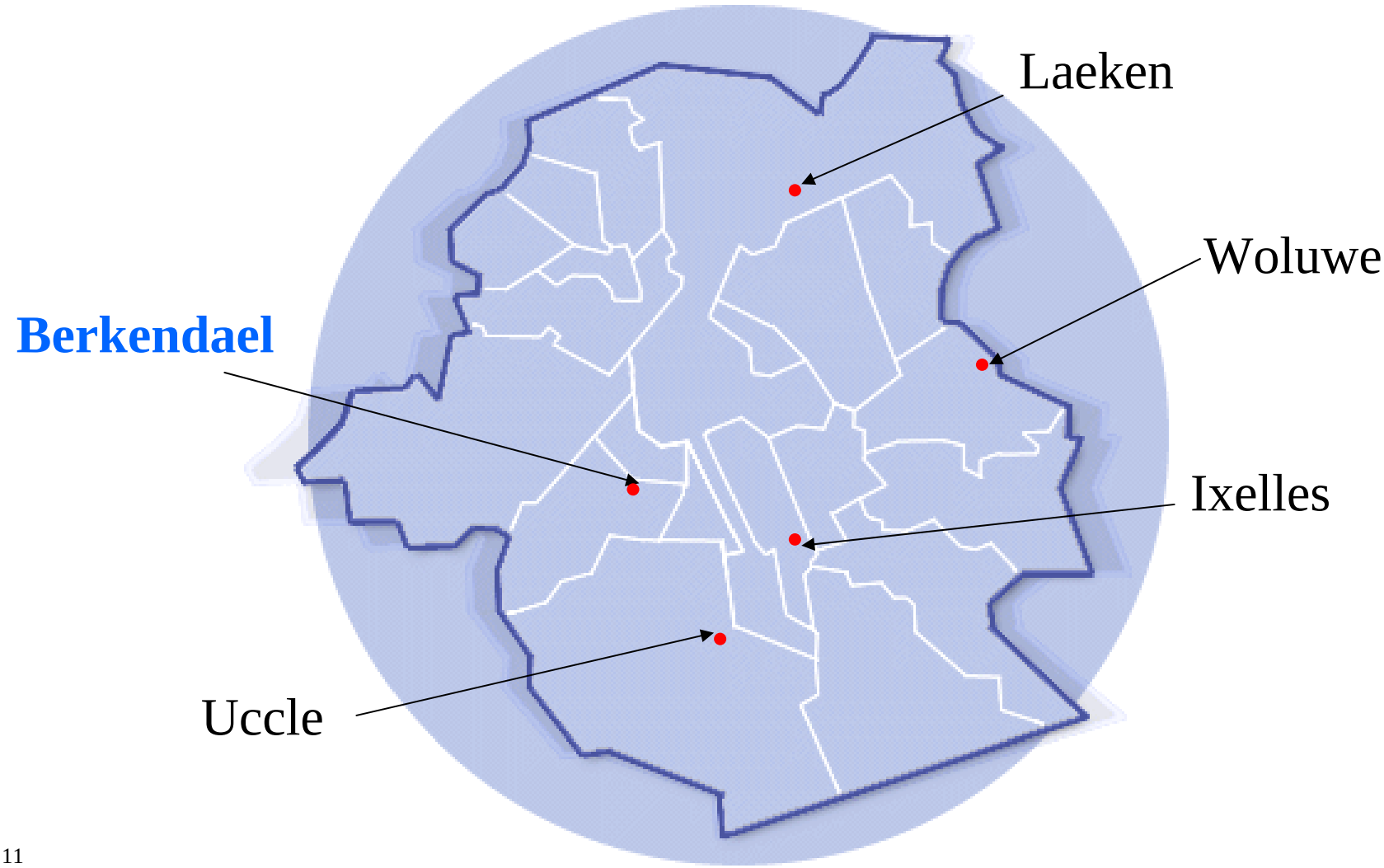
- It does not address the real needs (1500 pupils) as the maximum capacity is 750+250 = 1000
- It maximises the transfers :



Weaknesses of the proposal (3)

- As an annex to Uccle, this will lead to great pedagogical difficulties (so great that the Headmaster rejects this option !):
  - As the capacity is limited, not all sections can go there, thus causing problems for the common activities
  - Some teachers will have to split their time between the two schools, the travel time creating havoc in the timetable
  - The inflation of the Primary cycle at Uccle is a time bomb for the Secondary cycle. In reality, further transfers of children between schools are a solution to this problem, as already hinted by the Secretary general.

The dangers of the proposal (1)



The dangers of the proposal (2)

- Parents of pupils in Berkendael may well argue in future that it is unfair to transfer their children to Laeken, as there will be in the other schools children living closer to Laeken, and that the burden should be shared amongst all schools, thus destroying the decision painfully taken by the BoG. This risk materialises in a working paper* of the Groupe de Suivi:

  Si un site refuge raisonnablement proche de Laeken n'est pas fourni, c'est tout le processus de création de la nouvelle école qui s'en trouvera gravement compliqué du point de vue à la fois logistique et politique.

- As the nearest school, Woluwe, is dramatically overcrowded, the temptation to transfer pupils/sections to an empty school will be very strong !

* On www.gudee.eu

Advantages of the Berkendael proposal

- It is the only proposal on the table
- It is a transparent offer : parents know that their children will be transferred to Laeken
- A little manageable School
- It will bring some relief during the period before the opening of Laeken, incl. for Kindergarten and Primary cycles of the three other schools
- Ready for next school year: all enrolments will be accepted
- Without a transitory site, some children will be denied access to the EE, thus depriving the staff from one of their most cherished rights

Are there alternatives ?

- Yes, but the Belgian government is not playing in good faith (risk of having nothing, at the end)
- There were other possible sites in the shortlist.
- Both the Secretary general, Mr Ryan, and Commissioner Kallas wrote to the Prime Minister, Mr Verhofstadt, to ask for a transitory site closer to Laeken, possibly as a complement to Berkendael.

What if we say no ?

- Strong actions are needed, including strikes, demonstrations or other actions.
- Do not say no if you are not willing to support personally these actions !

Breaking News

- Oral report on the *Groupe de Suivi* held today.

The decision is yours !

Yes or No ?

- to Berkendael, as a transitory nucleus for Brussels IV (and in any case not as an annex to Uccle).

- to support the request of the Commission and the School Authorities to Belgium for a proposal of another site, closer to Laeken.

If the first question is answered negatively, this site is not a complement to Berkendael but a request for an alternative proposal.