

UK STATEMENT TO THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The UK delegation wishes to formally notify the Board of Governors that we will not replace any teachers who are leaving the European Schools system in August 2013. Furthermore, requests from schools seeking exceptional tenth years have not met the standards stipulated at the Board of Governors meeting in December 2012. The Board is also aware of our long standing position regarding new Anglophone teaching posts.

This statement will come as no surprise to the Board of Governors. As the UK made clear during their European Schools Presidency in 2011/12, the current cost sharing system is unfair, places a disproportionate burden on a few Member States contrary to Article 12.4 of the European Schools Convention, and requires fundamental reform. Our position on the urgent need for reform has not changed for a number of years and remains consistent with the discussions conducted during our Presidency.

In response to concerns from the UK and others, the Board of Governors passed a non-binding resolution in Stockholm in 2009 which linked the number of teachers seconded by a Member State proportionately to the number of their pupils. Under this system the UK would currently assign only 114 teachers (for 1760 pupils) as opposed to our existing level of 217. Very little progress has been made in respect of implementing this resolution - currently only eight Member States meet this agreed threshold.

This disproportionate financial burden is neither acceptable nor sustainable. Consequently, the UK has no option but to adhere to the 2009 resolution and we are therefore not planning to assign any additional teachers to the European Schools system until substantial progress has been made towards proportionality.

Unfortunately, and despite a widespread consensus, as a Board of Governors we have not yet been able to agree on the necessary action to address this current imbalance and achieve the reforms needed to achieve a fairer cost-sharing system. Nevertheless, the UK stands ready as a willing partner in the Board of Governors to work for the achievement of those reforms.

The Board of Governors should be aware that the UK is determined that the education experience of all European Schools pupils will not be adversely impacted by this decision. The UK intends to work closely with the Office of the Secretary-General and individual schools to facilitate the recruitment of suitably qualified and locally-engaged teachers, including from the UK, by assisting with advertising campaigns and the provision of whatever support is necessary during this exercise.

We earnestly hope that the Board of Governors will now move swiftly to develop and implement reform. Meantime, we will explore with the Irish EU Presidency, the European Commission and others the option of placing this issue on the agenda of a future Education Council for discussion between Ministers, with the aim of building consensus and achieving an acceptable resolution of the current situation.

UK Delegation
15 April 2013