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# The independent School in Europe today – and the role the national organizations are playing

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## 1) Freedom / possibility to start schools / to run schools

About starting a school the constitution has a few rules:

- Founding a school: everybody is free to found a school.
- The school can have a religious or non-religious denomination
- Education: freedom of method of education
- To get 100% state subsidy, there are a few conditions:
  - Minimum number of (possible) students
  - Supervision of state inspection
  - Many conditions concerning number of lessons, ability of teachers, quality of education, exams, financial rules and reports....

## 2) Professional and democratic leadership, Transparency, Accountability

### State Control / Auditing

In The Netherlands there are many differences in the way the schools are run.

The main basis for the differences is the scale of the units:

#### Large unit

- \* One board > many schools
- \* Board of paid professionals
- \* Distance board <> school
- \* Headmaster is just executive
- \* More specialists
- \* More layers of decision
- \* Two tier governance model  
(board and auditing committee are two separate bodies)

#### Small unit

- \* One board > one (or few) school(s)
- \* Board of parents with professional views
- \* Close contact board <> school
- \* Headmaster is representing the board
- \* More flexibility
- \* More multitasking
- \* One tier governance model  
(the board includes the auditing committee)

## 3) Pedagogical freedom for the single schools

- and the discussion of how and to which extend the independent schools are socially responsibility in the society.

- There is a common responsibility of all schools in a community to take care of enough education of high quality, so every student will be able to find a suitable school within a reasonable distance.
- Every school has the individual responsibility to provide good quality education and to account for it publically “Windows of Accountability” (publishing all kinds of quantitative and qualitative data on a central website)
- Schools are experimenting with the idea of the school as a social enterprise with strong ties with the local community

## 4) Other topics you think are of greatest relevance and importance for the next 5 years.....

- In many Western European countries the equal treatment of human beings is a growing issue. Aspects are: the increasing right wing opinion on immigrants, connected to “freedom of speech”. In the next few years it will be more difficult to find a balance between the task of a school to teach independent of political opinion and the wish to teach the students to deal with differences between people in a positive way.
- The policy of reducing the number of special schools for children with special needs together with a growing pressure on the regular schools to offer a kind of ‘inclusive’ education for all children.

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