

Draft Minutes
ECNAIS SEMINAR
“Modern view on the independent school in Europe”
Berlin, 15th and 16th November 2012
Hollywood Media Hotel

Attendants: Beatrice Lukas, Kurt Ernst, Claus Diedrichsen, Anke Tästensen, Per Kristensen, Peter Owen, Zsofia Bak, Szilvia Inhof, Sofia Reis, Viorel Enea, Andreea Bejanariu, Teclu Codresi, Aron Fuleki, Vasile Pantiru, Liliana Andrei, Alina Enea Amuntencei, Wim Kuiper, Simon Steen, Dick Wijte, Olena Movchun, Roman Nebozhuk, Oksana Balakshyna, Viktoriia Gamaiunova, Olena Gredynarova, Yana Gredynarova, Jolanta Kaluza, Detlef Hardrop.

In order to make these notes more coherent, they will not follow the Programme. The Opening session is followed by the contributions of different member organizations and then by the Round Table.

Welcome and opening of the Seminar

Thursday 15th November 2012

Simon Steen welcomes to participants, with special emphasis to the large delegations from Romania and Ukraine. The Seminar attendance is a success with 31 participants registered and some more accompanying persons from 10 different European countries.

Simon Steen does the presentation and the explanation of the programme, providing further information about the Seminar. The Seminar purpose is to share knowledge, existing inside ECNAIS, the idea is not to invite specialist speakers in fields connected to ECNAIS main field of interests, but asking contributions from participants from member organizations and explained how it was organized. The Seminar's topics were chosen among the topics raised in the Regional Conference in Bratislava, last April, in Bratislava, and the purpose is to contribute to with data and knowledge for a richer insight.

A novelty in the Seminar programme is a school visit. Due to the fact school visits were one of the issues participants value the most, and one of the more interesting learning and sharing experiences ECNAIS promotes, it was considered to include a school visit also in the programme of the November meeting. In Berlin, the school visit was made possible through the help and active contribution of Detlef Hardrop, managing director of Waldorf School Association of the state of Berlin/Brandenburg; he also participates in the seminar. Detlef Hardrop is introduced by Simon Steen, who thanks him for the organization of the school visit elucidating about the theme: self assessment.

Apologies for absence are mentioned: Michal Musil (SSSCMS, Czech Republic), José Maria Alvira (EyG Escuelas Católicas, Spain), Eugenio Gil (Fomento, Spain), Milka Slavcheva and Radka Karagyosova (BAPS, Bulgaria), Eric Bloemkolk (SOCIRES) and Carlos Diaz. Regards from Peter Warnders and Lexia Hulst (VBS).

Contributions from participants of Member Organizations

Thursday 15th and Friday 16th November

It was agreed to make a shift in the programme of the seminar and the first presentation was done by Sofia Reis (AEEP, Portugal) about: “**Governance role (school board/headmaster):** social ownership versus stakeholders, to be looked upon from the example of early childhood education; discussion.”

http://www.ecnais.org/content/2012_11_berlin/Sofia_Reis_governance_role.pdf

Simon Steen presented a **Dutch Experience on teachers Peer Review**. Teachers peer-review has an extended literature and it is considered a key-issue to teachers professional development (namely by organizations as the OECD). In The Netherlands there is a development supported by VBS, with guidance from Prof. Joseph Kessels from the Open University, and with a structured supporting platform: Onderwijscooperatie.

http://www.ecnais.org/content/2012_11_berlin/Simon_Steen_professional_development_of_teachers.pdf

After lunch, Kurt Ernst presented the **Danish example on the ‘Parents’ role in schools self evaluation’** making clear the role of parents but providing a comprehensive explanation about schools self-evaluation procedure.

http://www.ecnais.org/content/2012_11_berlin/Kurt_Ernst_parents_role.pdf

On Friday after lunch, Anke Tastense and Klaus Diedrichsen offered **A picture of the system for private and public education in one of the German Landern: Sleswig – Holstein**. It was possible to understand the differences between the systems in Germany as we the school visit had occurred during the very same morning. The open talk allowed comparisons between various countries and systems.

http://www.ecnais.org/content/2012_11_berlin/Anke_Tastensen_private_schools_in_Germany.pdf

Round Table

Thursday 15th November contributions from: The Netherlands, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Austria and Ukraine. On Friday 16th November contributions from: Poland, United Kingdom and Denmark.

Following each presentation, a discussion, questions and exchanges of points of view took place.

With the purpose to provide a flash about the situation of independent education in each country, and aiming to enhance knowledge and cohesion, this round table was set under the subject: “national topics: what is going around in the independent school sector in your country/organization which is of importance to Ecnais and its members”.

The most relevant key topics from the first country/organization that took the word was The Netherlands – The Besturenraad (Wim Kuiper)

- Historically the Dutch system enjoyed big amount of autonomy and has a large independent sector enrolling around 75% of pupils, from long ago private schools are 100% funded. In financial terms the evolution of funding in public and private sector is not so positive.
- There is a tendency for more centralization and less freedom as a consequence of PISA testing, which politicians are instrumentalizing and national unified testing is being introduced for all the primary schools. This testing will decrease the autonomy of schools.
- New government of Social Democrats and Liberals which are less supportive for the freedom of education than the Christian democrats.
- The new government's agenda, inspired in McKinsey report 'From good to great'¹; which is a good report to use by the schools for development, but not for further descriptions of the government.
- There is a percentage of the grant for the schools that is taken away and put in a special box which only becomes available according to performance (government sets targets).
- Push to more efficiency within the system because of the economic crisis and that can take room away for independent schools next to public schools e.g. vocational schools and primary schools in region with a decreasing population.
- 70% of the parents still prefer the private schools.
- Extra funding besides the grants for the schools for professionalization of teachers and headmasters.

2. Hungary, AME (Zofia Bak)

- We follow the blue line (a declining situation)
- Expectations towards 2014 elections' for new government
- Christian democrats are against freedom and only want centralization in education; all forms of diversity (good for children and parents) are rejected. It is all about money and power now.
- Nowadays, the private schools are now really in danger, they try to survive somehow.
- From January 2013 every private school will become a public school at least that is the policy from the government;
- Schools will have to follow all the detailed instructions from the government otherwise they will not be subsidized and will close.
- Most private schools are for the deprived (Roma) and handicapped children;
- In new educational law the age of the compulsory school is lowered to the age of 16 – there is no projects to protect the more deprived children (so the more deprives children will be on the street until they are 18).

¹ <http://mckinseysociety.com/how-the-worlds-most-improved-school-systems-keep-getting-better/>

3. Portugal, AEEP (Sofia Reis with PPP)

- Critical financial situation. Despite the very difficult financial situation in Portugal, a protocol between AEEP and the Ministry of Education was signed
- 20 % independent schools
- Quite a number (93) of these schools function in regions where there were no public schools, and are funded by the government. The rules of funding are changing (decrease of the amount) but in balance with an increase of autonomy.
- The protocol is to introduce new rules on the management of the curriculum in the independent sector.

4. Romania, UNDI PRP (Viorel Ennea)

- Frame Law 1 from November 2011 has to be finalized (regulated).
- A small group of 4 or 5 colleagues of the association will cooperate with the ministry for the implementation of this law.
- Hopefully the ministry will help that the private schools will arise.
- 9 December 2012 Parliament elections.
- The leaders in parliament don't sympathize with the independent schools' sector.
- They feel that the private schools, in the short term of existence (5 years of functioning), are a threat for the public schools.
- Managers and other colleagues of the private sector in ECNAIS could help the private sector in Romania.
- Compatibility between diff systems in Europe: to make compatible the internal rules of the different European countries.
- Suggestion to exchange and share documents about the different countries within ECNAIS, tough out the website (we can come back on that in MC , to be held next Saturday), that enables comparisons among the different European systems.
- Invitation for national congress in March 2013.

5. Austria (Beatrice Lukas)

- In 1962 started the initial private school funding and, it was in that time especially meant for the catholic schools on the basis of the 'Concordat' (legal agreement between the Austrian State and the Vatican) and teachers are civil servants alike the public schools teachers.-
- After that there came different alternative schools but the law didn't change till 2009 those alternative schools didn't get real funding from the government. In 2009 a start with subsidy for those schools as a gift not as a right.
- Since they have argued for subsidy for non-denominational schools. Now a working group of the ministry is changing the 'private rule act' (educational law) to make subsidies possible for the non-denominational schools.
- Only for state educated teachers those schools will get subsidy, to strive for subsidy, may jeopardize the freedom schools have. These schools also were until now very free, for example they could engage teachers with the profile they wanted (ex: Montessori teachers with 3 years of Montessori training), which within the new proposal will not be possible any longer.

- In the end of November 2012, there will be a big meeting of all private schools in Vienna to balance and discuss alternatives: the debate will be to see what freedoms do they lose in exchange of the subsidies and to consider new terms for the acceptance of this subsidy.
 - More and more the public schools take over the didactical approach of the alternative schools. The ideas of freedom get more and more publicity. The independent sector being the developers for new approach in the public schools.
 - The connection with ECNAIS, and the networking, is for them a source of mental strength.
6. Ukraine, Association of Kyiev private schools (father Roman Nebozhuk)
- Real diversity in the political situation for future outcome of education. In the new parliament there are five very different parties (from communists till strong nationalist right wing parties: against any democratic developments and against Europe)
 - Ukrainian educational platform is a civic movement, which just renovated its action programme for the next three years. It's not only private education, it is civil society cooperation.
 - The Platform tries to reach more parties in parliament and work together with the different associations reflecting on good examples and good practices from abroad.
 - There is a draft law for secondary compulsory education.
 - There is real religious diversity; there is a religious majority in Ukraine which wants to support non-governmental schools. Parental right on religion. There is a wide consensus about the need to reinforce social cohesion.
 - We are not optimistic and not pessimistic.
 - It is important to have our own rules, a well educated youth, which enables to send a positive message to the civil society.
 - ECNAIS can lobby for EU efforts
 - problems for neighbor countries of EU, and the willingness of Ukraine to be a future member of UE.
 - Declaration of the Council of Europe on parental choice and freedom of religion. The Platform wants that the legislation will fits more the EU -they argue for role of parents and connection of private schools with the civil society (Wim Kuipers mentions a recent report of the Council of Europe about the right of parents in education).
 - The all independent sector have to take the curriculum and syllabus from the public schools and schools' are run under the same rules as public schools.
 - The prevailing problem on the land tax for private schools and the financial consequences.
 - (Olena Movchun): no financial support from the state, education is granted free of costs only to children attending public schools. Although we have to fulfill all the requirements of the state ; the general financial situation for private schools is rather difficult and 5 private schools in Kiev closed this year; we need freedom and support for our individual programs; the results on tests are better in private schools than in public schools;
 - invitation for national forum the 10th of December 2012;
 - The interest to know in depth the situation of education in Denmark and the Netherlands; you are an inspiring perspective for us; we believe in freedom and diversity.

7. Poland, KFON (Jolanta Kaluza)

- New academic teachers training with taken into account new technologies and new knowledge about socio-psychological development of children. A large debate is being held.
- A national project on ICT developments. Public schools have special grants and the independent schools are running pilot projects: we have to adopt new media programs (also white boards) in our schools, for the use of multimedia supporting educational process.
- Education needs to be more effective;
- Reform of curriculum in middle junior school (children from 12 to 15) and gymnasium.
- Kindergarten for everybody.
- Differences on the funding of vocational training. Which is paid only after the final professional examination, but the problem is: who supports the school for the first three years.

8. England (Peter Owen)

- For a conservative government, which members of Cabinet mostly come from Eton, do try to avoid that the public thinks they give extras to the independent schools. And there are a cohesive political speech supporting 'social mobility'.
- Now there is the need to make room for new free schools, granted by the central government, teaching the national curriculum, and following regulations for the public schools (They cannot be selective). So in practice, those are independent schools created by the state, but not attracting enough children: in practice they did not prove to be a threat to the independent sector. In conclusion, free schools are not doing anything about social mobility.
- Government is concerned about the standards of education. PISA results have gone down for the UK, although not for the independent school.
- The analyses are that the curriculum has become increasingly more general. All attempts to modernize the curriculum turned to dilution of contents.
- Government produces league tables for schools (based on five A levels); now schools need student to pass 5 subject examination, and students can choose a light program subjects without f.i. science
- 95% of students pass examinations, the exams are too easy (what is now a pass would have been a fail 10 years ago) and they are not a challenge for children. This being a problem in the independent sector and independent schools choose for IGCSE or IB because it's more challenging and demanding for students. A group of schools decided to produce their own examinations.
- The conservative government favors independent education and wants to create financial incentives for children from deprived areas/families, but they fear the public opinion, as the government cannot be seen as supporting rich schools or the education of children from rich families.
- Concerning the examinations, and if more than 90 % passes the exams what is then the exams have to be more rigorous. The state secretary now wants to go back and to

- modernize and make exams more rigorous. And instructions were given to increase the corrections level, taking by surprise students and teachers.
- The good independent schools have more demand than ever. Some schools are striving, because they are weaker, and 2 of them will close this year.

9. Denmark, DCICIS (Kurt Ernst)

- 100 % of passing in examinations in Denmark for a very long time.
- private schools are growing and the number of students is increasing.
- there is more interest from the parent, more scientific publications but also with the press
- the financial support of the government for private schools in decreasing.
- there are plans to make some new criteria for funding schools, and there is a tendency to give part of the subsidy to award so called 'special performances' on a promotional basis. We rather get less subsidy then to lose our freedom and having to meet governmental targets.
- Decline of population and especially decrease of the number of pupils in public schools.
- There are cuts for education for children with special needs.
- The biggest problem for the private schools is that the public schools have really big problems

General Evaluation

Ukraine

- Gathering: observing the situation of independent schools in other countries
- Governments are willing for education unification; parents and children want diversity in education
- Two important questions (Olena) (i) how to increase teachers professional development, (ii) how to increase cooperation with parents.
- During these days we talked about countries and governments, about parents, about teachers, but children are missing
- When we are visiting a school we should have criteria to understand what we are visiting. To observe classrooms and to see performances of children.

Austria

- Thankful for the participation
- Able to collect information about history and about the situation in the neighbor countries

Hungary

- School visit was disappointing because there was no real contact with children and no visits to classrooms.

Denmark

- Very few information about self-evaluation

The Netherlands

- The value to meet in Ecnais is about the things that have been shared and the ideas that have been shared.
- To reflect on our own work (mirrored by what we get from others) and to get new impulses for one's own work.
- Considered very positive the new time arrangement/length of two days Seminar; the amount of interesting themes (allows to go in-depth); members of the group giving lectures

This minutes were written by Sofia Reis upon notes taken by Simon Steen.