



ECNAIS

European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools

Cooperation and lobbying for Independent Schools in Europe



European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools

The European Council of National Association of Independent Schools (ECNAIS) was founded in 1988 and unifies 20 National associations from:

- **North, South and Western Europe**
- **Central and Eastern Europe**
- **Countries outside the EU:
Belarus, Turkey, Iceland and Ukraine**



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Associated members are:

- **The Independent Schools Council of Australia**
- **The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship**



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ECNAIS is

- **A non-political, non-confessional, international association**
- **For collaboration between national associations of independent schools in European countries**
- **For sharing experience, information and knowledge**
- **For lobbying on European level**



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Vision statement of ECNAIS (I)

- **The human right to offer educational alternatives to state education should be unchallenged in all European states**
- **It should be accepted and/or supported through national legislation**
- **The parental choice of an alternative education should be supported through state funding**



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Vision statement of ECNAIS (II)

- **Independent schools should be free to pursue their own values within the framework of the European Convention and Human rights**
- **They should have the autonomy to determine their own curriculum**
- **They should be transparent and accountable for quality of their education**



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We use the word ‘Independent’ School But what’s in a name?

- **State schools**
- **Public schools**
- **Charter schools**
- **Independent schools**
- **Religious schools**
- **Pedagogical renewing schools**
- **Private schools**



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**ECNAIS' objective
is
to complement
rather
than
to compete
with national systems**



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New social initiatives

ECNAIS has also members

- **Representing new social initiatives e.g. from Austria and Switzerland**
- **To strengthen participation of parents in education**
- **To establish more diversity in the national educational system**

Independent lobbying Efforts (I)

Rumania

- **The minister of education changed his mind from negative about independent schools into positive**
- **He promoted the added value of independent schools in the public debate**
- **He took the responsibility for new legislation with the right on public funding of those schools by the state**

Independent lobbying Efforts (II)

European Parliament

ECNAIS strongly supported

- **Art 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (2000/2009)**
The right for education
- **The freedom to found educational establishments with due respect for democratic principles and**
- **The right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions**



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Independent lobbying Efforts (III)

Culture and Education Committee of the European Parliament

- **The vice-chair of the committee stated in his keynote speech on ECNAIS Conference about “Lifelong Learning”, Mallorca, April 2014**
 - **Europe needs diversity**
 - **Europe needs the help of independent schools**
- **NGO status of ECNAIS with the Council of Europe**



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Independent schools have to give evidence of (I)

- **The broader results of their education**
- **Their contribution to the solution of questions society faces today**
- **How they reflect and strengthen diversity and pluralism in society**

Independent schools have to give evidence of (II)

- **Their innovative initiatives/ ‘pedagogical’ entrepreneurship**
- **The added value to society by increasing the quality of education on all schools (competition/ freedom of choice/ room for an alternative approach)**
- **The proof of their added value by research of OECD, Worldbank etc.**



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Independent education is

not a right

that once acquired

will last forever