

Dear Guests,

As the Turkish Private Schools Association we are very happy to host the European Council (ECNAIS) meeting taking place in Istanbul and welcome you, our esteemed guests from 16 different European Countries.

The theme of this program that is going to take place before the General Meeting of ECNAIS of Saturday April 18th, 2015 is '**Self-evaluation is part of culture of school improvement**'. Several esteemed speakers from different European countries that are ECNAIS members and Prof. Üstün Ergüder from Turkey will be sharing their opinions related with this theme during the program.

Due to the centralized management and control of the school programs, plus the centralized examination system, we are experiencing an increasing amount of loss of uniqueness in the education system of our country. Looking at it from the perspective of self-evaluation, which is our theme, this sameness makes the private schools group, that we represent, unhappy because it limits us in many respects. The general evaluation systems limit the creativity of our teachers and students, the possibilities for innovation and on the spot educational opportunities and many other characteristic practices, which are our distinctive features.

Some of our member schools show interest in accreditation institutions because they believe it may help them in self-evaluation for the purpose of their own institutional improvement. The interest shown in the CIS workshop held at our headquarters, and the IB accreditation workshop this month is an indication of this reality.

The illuminating speeches on the theme of the conference by representatives from different countries of Europe present here and the thought of provoking and creative idea exchange sessions following each one of these speeches with the facilitation of Mr. Simon Steen, the chair of ECNAIS will be very valuable. We will all have the opportunity to be enriched by the shared experience and knowledge accumulation of delegates coming from different systems.

Another special distinctive feature of these programs is the opportunity created to visit and make first hand observations at different schools of the host country. This opportunity will be presented to our guests by the support of nine schools on the Anatolian side of Istanbul, taking the traffic conditions into consideration. On behalf of our association and ECNAIS, we thank our member schools for inviting our guests to their schools.

Once again I say 'Hoş geldiniz' (welcome) on behalf of The Turkish Private Schools Association and wish you a very successful conference.

With regards,

Cem Gülan
Co-president of
The Turkish Private Schools Association