



ECNAIS

European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools

Cooperation and lobbying for Independent Schools in Europe

Budapest, Hungary , 8 and 9 May 2015



European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools

The European Council of National Association of Independent Schools (ECNAIS) was founded in 1988 and unifies 22 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**
- **Elternlobby.CH**
- **Stichting Rijdende School (school for children of occupational travellers)**



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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**



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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



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Let's face in time possible

Threats

and

Challenges



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THREATS

Political

Ideological

Social

Economical



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CHALLENGES

Diversity in society

Tolerance and non-discrimination

Decentralization

Self- evaluation of schools