

## **The private school sector in Germany**

**Anke Tästensen, ECNAIS-Seminar in Berlin, 16.11.12**

**Article 7 of the Constitution Law – Grundgesetz – guarantees the right to found private schools.**

**Private Schools as a substitute for public schools need a permission from the state and must refer to the laws of each „Bundesland“ – each federal state.**

**The permission to run private schools must be given if they are aiming the same standards as public schools and there is no segregation of pupils because of a lower income of their parents. The rights of the teachers are also the same as in public schools.**

**The reason why the Constitution law (Grundgesetz) is this highly prioritated is because of the Human Rights and is a result of the experiences from the period of the National Socialism.**

**So the state supports the founding of Private Schools. However the opinion about the amount of the tuition fees is not the same in each federal state , because there are different rules.**

**Every federal state decides on its own how to deal with the inspection of the private schools. Usually newly started schools get no financial support in the first few years (often**

the first 3-4 years). Only a few of the federal states pay the „saved“ money back.

Normally the financial support from the state referring to the salary of the teachers is between 70% and 90% compared to State Schools. Other forms of subsidies could be given for building measures or teaching materials, as e.g. books or Smart-Boards.

**Financial support of private schools in Germany:**

**The federal state - around 78%**

**The Federal Republic (the state) – around 2%**

**The municipalities – around 4%**

**Private: parents- around 10%**

**Owner of the school – around 5%**

**Statistics**

In the school year 2009/2010 there were 5200 private schools in Germany. 3196 of them were Primary and Secondary Schools or High Schools (Gymnasium). Referring to the amount of all schools in Germany – there are 43577 – the part of the private schools is 11,9%.

**From these 11,9% private schools in Germany**

**23% are catholic**

**14,5% are lutheran**

**8% are Waldorf Schools**

**The rest of the schools can not be put into a system, but most of them have a reformpedagogical background/ideology.**

**Two types of Private Schools in Germany**

**Ersatzschulen (literally: substitute schools)**

**and**

**Ergänzungsschulen (literally: auxiliary schools)**

**There are also Private Hochschulen (private colleges and universities) in Germany, but similar to the UK, the term private school is almost never used of universities or other tertiary institutions.**

**Ersatzschulen are ordinary primary or secondary schools, which are run by private individuals, private organizations or religious groups. These schools offer the same types of diplomas as public schools.**

**Ersatzschulen lack the freedom to operate completely outside of government regulation. Teachers at Ersatzschulen**

**must have at least the same education and at least the same wages as teachers at public schools.**

**An Ersatzschule must have at least the same academic standards as a public school and Article 7, § 4 of the Constitution Law (Grundgesetz), also forbids segregation of pupils according to the means of their parents (the so-called Sonderungsverbot).**

**Therefore, most Ersatzschulen have very low tuition fees and/or offer scholarships, compared to most other Western European countries.**

**However, it is not possible to finance these schools with such low tuition fees, which is why all German Ersatzschulen are additionally financed with public funds. The percentages of public money could reach 100% of the personnel expenditures.**

### **Ergänzungsschulen**

**are secondary schools, which are run by private individuals, private organizations or rarely – religious groups- and offer a type of education which is not available at public schools. Most of these schools are vocational schools. However – these vocational schools are not part of the German dual system.**

**Ergänzungsschulen have the freedom to operate outside the government regulation and are funded in whole by charging their students tuition fees.**

### **Private schools in Schleswig-Holstein**

**In Schleswig-Holstein there are 75 private schools. Around 13000 pupils attend these schools.**

**All the schools are „Ersatzschulen“ as e.g. the Waldorf-Schools.**

**After a probationary period they usually are subsidied with 80% of their material and personell costs.**

**There are different types of private schools in Schleswig-Holstein:**

**Schools of the Danish Minority: There are 46 schools and they are subsidied with 100%**

**Waldorf-Schools: There are 11 schools and the final exams as Realschulabschluss and Abitur are done with external teacher/examinators**

**Schools for pupils with mental disability: Also these schools are subsidied with 100%**

**Schools run by the Church: In Schleswig-Holstein there is one lutheran Primary and Secondary School in Kiel and one catholic Primary School in Lübeck.**

**Other private schools: several other private schools deal with innovative teaching methods as an alternative to the public school system. At the Leibnizschule in Elmshorn they work with the immersion method, where most of the lessons from the first grade upwards are taught in English. The Montessori Schools, as well as the Ostseeschule in Flensburg, teach with ideas and methods from the reform pedagogical thoughts and ideals.**

**As shown there is a wide range of variety concerning the independent school sector in Schleswig-Holstein.**

**Application process for substitute private schools (independent schools) in Schleswig-Holstein**

- 1) There must be a proof to the school authorities. Who is the owner of the school?**
- 2) The educational pedagogical concept of the school: Primary and secondary independent schools must have a special pedagogical background/interest, which must be approved by the Ministry of Education. So far ideological schools are concerned, parents must present their confirmation for it. Schools have to present the total duration of the school years (e.g. class 1-10) and they have to present how the pupils achieve the final exams. The timetable with both compulsory and elective courses as well as the teaching and lesson**

plans for all subjects must be accepted by the Ministry of Education.

- 3) **Head of school and the teachers:** Concerning the head of school and the teacher staff, the school must proof their academical training, as e.g. compared to a public teacher training study at the University. If there is a special pedagogical concept at the school, this also must be accepted by the Ministry of Education, as e.g. the Montessori-Diploma, and all employment contracts have to be approved as well.
- 4) **The financing concept** also has to be confirmed with its student contributions, its economic plan with all staff and material costs and its monthly tuition fee, which usually is somewhere between 150 and 200 Euro a month.
- 5) **School Contract:** The agreement between parents and school.
- 6) **The school site:** - Location, size and equipment of classrooms/ - Who has the right to use it?/ - Safety regulations (fire-accident-health-occupational safety)
- 7) **Health care for the students**
- 8) **Waiting time/Waiting list:** Schleswig-Holstein pays 80% of the student expense after 2 years probation time, if there have not been any complaints about the school. It is also possible to get grants for construction investment.

