

To:

Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools

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Secretary General: Mr. Giancarlo Marcheggiano
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Deputy Secretary General: Mr. Andreas Beckmann
osg-deputy-secretary-general@eursc.eu

cc.: Directors and deputy directors of the European Schools
Frankfurt, Karlsruhe and Munich, Luxemburg II,
Brussels I, Brussels II, Brussels III and Brussels IV

Secondary School Inspector for all European Schools, Mr. Stefan Walz

European Patent Office (EPO),
European Southern Observatory (ESO) and NATO,
who are sending students to the European Schools

2.12.2018

Dear Mr. Marcheggiano, dear Mr. Beckmann,

we, the parent representatives of the Educational Councils and Parents Associations of the European Schools indicated below, were recently informed about the Decision of the German Kultusminister Konferenz (KMK), dated June 14. 2018. Said decision addresses the conversion from the new marking system of the European Schools into the German national grades*. Since published on the official website of the Kultusminister Konferenz, we assume in the following that this document is valid and that the decision will soon become legally binding.

The introduction of a new marking system in the European Schools requires all countries to adapt their way of recognizing the European Baccalaureate for the purpose of higher education, in particular access to universities. Evidently Germany plays a leading role in adopting new conversion tables because it appears to be the first country to publish the intended conversion scheme. This happened even before the European marking system was applied and any experience was acquired with it. Due to reasons of harmonization we expect that other nations will take a similar approach. The German approach is simply a linear conversion of our new marks of 5 to 10 into the national system. Hence, the focus of the new European marking system on the pupil's positive performance and attainment gets lost in translation.

To better understand the impact of the KMK-decision, we have developed a conversion table of the marks (see appendix A) highlighting the magnitude of deterioration for our students. The table shows the previous conversion into German marks based on the previous European marks and future conversion from new European marks into German marks side by side.

Clearly, the simple linear conversion of the previous European marks 6-10 to the new European marks 5-10 leads to a downgrading. Of course, such a conversion should never be done in the first place, since the idea was to provide more grades for better performers. The FAQ for the new marking system emphasize that a simple conversion must not be used. However, we do see that this year's November reports in many schools appear to be lower by 0,5 on average, indicating that some teachers might simply convert marks from the old to the new system.

While this first phenomenon might be corrected over time, we notice a fundamental difference in the attainment descriptors. In fact, when our students are being told by our schools that they are "excellent", Germany classifies them only as "very good". Even worse: our schools grade them as "very good" and Germany classifies that merely as "good" and yet some "good" descriptors are even mapped to "satisfactory", i.e. mediocre. In other words, an overall downgrading of the European School system took place.

Our simulations show that, compared to the old system, the students now must perform up to 8% better to achieve the same German mark (see appendix B). Sadly enough, this improvement is primarily expected from our better students, who are already strongly competing for university admissions and scholarships. All other students, however, are adversely affected as well.

We fear that this downgrading of the European Schools will, when propagated to the other countries, damage the reputation of our schools not only in Germany but also throughout Europe. It will create a disincentive to send children to European Schools.

In our view this development is simply not acceptable, and we strongly urge you to take any possible measure to remedy the negative impact of the new marking system and any new conversion scheme on our students and schools.

Sincerely,

Carsten Metz

For the Educational Council, European School Munich, Germany

Ursula Haider

For the Educational Council, European School Munich, Germany

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For the Parents' Association, European School Munich, Germany

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*see:

KMK decision:

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2018/2018_06_14-Richtlinien-EuropSchulen.pdf

Attainment descriptors:

<https://www.eurasc.eu/Syllabuses/2016-09-D-37-en-3.pdf>

Previously used conversion method:

<https://www.eurasc.eu/Documents/2014-03-D-25-en-5.pdf>

Appendix A:

Previous marking system			New marking system						
German descriptor	German marks according to conversion of 1975	Previous European mark	New European mark	German marks according to KMK conversion of 2018	German descriptor	ES-Attainment descriptors	Grade	German mark deterioration	
Best pass	Very good	1,0	10	10,00	1,0	Very good	Excellent	A	0,0
	Very good	1,0	9,9	9,98	1,0	Very good	Excellent	A	0,0
	Very good	1,0	9,8	9,75	1,0	Very good	Excellent	A	0,0
	Very good	1,0	9,7	9,63	1,0	Very good	Excellent	A	0,0
	Very good	1,0	9,6	9,50	1,0	Very good	Excellent	A	0,0
	Very good	1,0	9,5	9,38	1,0	Very good	Excellent	A	0,0
	Very good	1,0	9,4	9,25	1,2	Very good	Excellent	A	-0,2
	Very good	1,0	9,3	9,13	1,3	Very good	Excellent	A	-0,3
	Very good	1,0	9,2	9,00	1,3	Very good	Excellent	A	-0,3
	Very good	1,0	9,1	8,88	1,4	Very good	Very good	B	-0,4
	Very good	1,0	9	8,75	1,5	Good	Very good	B	-0,5
	Very good	1,1	8,9	8,63	1,6	Good	Very good	B	-0,5
	Very good	1,2	8,8	8,50	1,7	Good	Very good	B	-0,5
	Very good	1,3	8,7	8,38	1,8	Good	Very good	B	-0,5
	Very good	1,4	8,6	8,25	1,8	Good	Very good	B	-0,4
	Good	1,5	8,5	8,13	1,9	Good	Very good	B	-0,4
	Good	1,6	8,4	8,00	2,0	Good	Very good	B	-0,4
	Good	1,7	8,3	7,88	2,1	Good	Good	C	-0,4
	Good	1,8	8,2	7,75	2,2	Good	Good	C	-0,4
	Good	1,9	8,1	7,63	2,3	Good	Good	C	-0,4
	Good	2	8	7,50	2,3	Good	Good	C	-0,3
	Good	2,1	7,9	7,38	2,4	Good	Good	C	-0,3
	Good	2,2	7,8	7,25	2,5	Satisfactory	Good	C	-0,3
	Good	2,3	7,7	7,13	2,6	Satisfactory	Good	C	-0,3
	Good	2,4	7,6	7,00	2,7	Satisfactory	Good	C	-0,3
	Satisfactory	2,5	7,5	6,88	2,8	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	D	-0,2
	Satisfactory	2,6	7,4	6,75	2,8	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	D	-0,2
	Satisfactory	2,7	7,3	6,63	2,9	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	D	-0,2
	Satisfactory	2,8	7,2	6,50	3,0	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	D	-0,2
	Satisfactory	2,9	7,1	6,38	3,1	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	D	-0,2
	Satisfactory	3	7	6,25	3,2	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	D	-0,2
	Satisfactory	3,1	6,9	6,13	3,3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	D	-0,1
	Satisfactory	3,2	6,8	6,00	3,3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	D	-0,1
Satisfactory	3,3	6,7	5,88	3,4	Satisfactory	Sufficient	E	-0,1	
Satisfactory	3,4	6,6	5,75	3,5	Sufficient	Sufficient	E	-0,1	
Sufficient	3,5	6,5	5,63	3,6	Sufficient	Sufficient	E	-0,1	
Sufficient	3,6	6,4	5,50	3,7	Sufficient	Sufficient	E	-0,1	
Sufficient	3,7	6,3	5,38	3,8	Sufficient	Sufficient	E	0,0	
Sufficient	3,8	6,2	5,25	3,8	Sufficient	Sufficient	E	0,0	
Sufficient	3,9	6,1	5,13	3,9	Sufficient	Sufficient	E	0,0	
Worst pass	Sufficient	4	5,00	4,0	Sufficient	Sufficient	E	0,0	

*New European marks are rounded to 2 decimals

Appendix B:

German marks	Previous European mark	New European mark		Required new European mark	Required change of mark, compared to previous EU mark	Required change of mark, compared to new EU mark
1,0	9,0	8,75	→	9,38	4%	7%
1,1	8,9	8,63	→	9,35	5%	8%
1,2	8,8	8,50	→	9,20	5%	8%
1,3	8,7	8,38	→	9,05	4%	8%
1,4	8,6	8,25	→	8,90	3%	8%
1,5	8,5	8,13	→	8,75	3%	8%
1,6	8,4	8,00	→	8,60	2%	8%
1,7	8,3	7,88	→	8,45	2%	7%
1,8	8,2	7,75	→	8,30	1%	7%
1,9	8,1	7,63	→	8,15	1%	7%
2,0	8,0	7,50	→	8,00	0%	7%
2,1	7,9	7,38	→	7,85	-1%	6%
2,2	7,8	7,25	→	7,70	-1%	6%
2,3	7,7	7,13	→	7,55	-2%	6%
2,4	7,6	7,00	→	7,40	-3%	6%
2,5	7,5	6,88	→	7,25	-3%	5%
2,6	7,4	6,75	→	7,10	-4%	5%
2,7	7,3	6,63	→	6,95	-5%	5%
2,8	7,2	6,50	→	6,80	-6%	5%
2,9	7,1	6,38	→	6,65	-6%	4%
3,0	7,0	6,25	→	6,50	-7%	4%
3,1	6,9	6,13	→	6,35	-8%	4%
3,2	6,8	6,00	→	6,20	-9%	3%
3,3	6,7	5,88	→	6,05	-10%	3%
3,4	6,6	5,75	→	5,90	-11%	3%
3,5	6,5	5,63	→	5,75	-12%	2%
3,6	6,4	5,50	→	5,60	-13%	2%
3,7	6,3	5,38	→	5,45	-13%	1%
3,8	6,2	5,25	→	5,30	-15%	1%
3,9	6,1	5,13	→	5,15	-16%	0%
4,0	6,0	5,00	→	5,00	-17%	0%

Here, the “Required new European mark” refers to the mark which is required to obtain the same German mark as in the old marking system.

*New European marks are rounded to 2 decimals