



InterParents

The European Parents Association of the European Schools

ALICANTE, BERGEN, BRUXELLES I, II, III, IV, FRANKFURT,
KARLSRUHE, LUXEMBURG I, II, MOL, MÜNCHEN, VARESE

Dear Member of the Board of Governors,

With this letter we would like to draw your attention to a circumstance which, if no alternative solution is found, will be of great disadvantage for the future of this year's graduates and also for the reputation of our European Schools:

As you all know, the New Marking System (NMS) is being used for the first time for this year's BAC class. The OSGES informed you in March and October 2019 of the decisive improvements that the new system will bring to the assessment (Annex A and B). Furthermore, it was made transparent that due to the system, the grade average will be reduced and at the same time it will become more difficult to achieve grades in the upper range of the grading scale. It was therefore necessary, in order to continue to adequately reflect the performance of the pupils of our schools in the respective national grade, to adjust the conversion accordingly (upwards).

The NMS was developed and approved by all Member States. This committee and all Member States have contributed to this. If there was ever any doubt that it had worsened the performance and quality of the European Schools, it would have been the responsibility of those who held this opinion to address it in advance and seek solutions. Fortunately, this was not the case. In the last years in particular, there have been no complaints, no reprimands for achievements that have been made in the NMS since the implementation in 2018.

It is all the more surprising, that the new conversion tables in some countries, instead of following this advice of the OSGES, have devalued (instead of upgraded) the marks of the NMS (Annex C, slides 4-

9)¹. In many cases, the indication that the NMS leads to a lowering of grades without a lowering of standards was not included in national conversions.

It cannot be emphasized enough that only the grading scale has changed, not the pass mark and not the curricula, nor the performance of the pupils compared to previous years. So it seems that either the new system and its consequences have not been communicated clearly enough to these Member States or that these Member States, without indicating this earlier, are of the opinion that the quality has suddenly decreased considerably due to the NMS. However, since a large number of the Member States were of the opinion that it was correct to reevaluate with the conversion, because the NMS already downgrades the grades within the system, an unclear situation arises which, in its reasons and consequences, we believe urgently needs to be discussed.

In order to avert irrevocable damage to the reputation of the EU BAC as well as the 20/21 graduates, we request that you adopt a more unified line and ensure that this year's graduates are not at a disadvantage to those in comparison to previous years.

We would like to encourage you, in your important position as a board member and governor of our unique school system:

- to ask the OSG to examine and to provide a report by 15 May 2021 whether the national equivalence calculations of all Member States ensure the equal treatment of European School graduates with graduates under the national systems
- to postpone the application of new equivalence calculations confirmed as problematic (see Annex C, slides 4-9).

In such cases, the old equivalence calculations should be applied based on a linear translation of NMS marks of concerned pupils into the marks calculated on the basis prior to the introduction.

Even if this is not an ideal solution and will only be used on a transitional basis. Important conformity controls must not be dispensed with because, especially due to the current pandemic situation, those involved were busy with more urgent tasks like ensuring the operation of the schools and those NMS conversion problems are only now coming into focus.

The graduating class of 20/21 has already experienced sufficient stress and burden over the last 14 months. And throughout our students have continuously shown great commitment despite everything – the pandemic and disrupted teaching, BREXIT, the new marking system and now new equivalence tables. To say nothing of the wellbeing challenges. The devaluation of the BAC by member states at this time is neither fair nor morally acceptable.

You are our Governors – you have responsibility for these students. You can change this.

Pere Moles Palleja
Interparents president

ANNEX: A, B, C

¹ The analysis was done on the basis of the non-public document: *Update on the Introduction of the New Marking System* (2019-11-D-23-en-5) presented at the Board of Governors of the European Schools meeting of 13-15 April 2021.