

**NOTE TO THE APEEE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON THE PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE APEEE MEMBERSHIP FEE**

According to the Art. 3 of the statutes of our Association *“La qualité de membre adhérent s’acquiert automatiquement pour l’année scolaire en cours par le paiement de la cotisation annuelle.”* The Board of the APEEE and the General Assembly (GA) have previously decided to apply a Membership fee of 50 EUR per family. In addition, according to Art. 5.3, it is within the power of the General Assembly to set the amount of the annual Membership fee.

The APEEE Board and the Treasurer have the obligation to ensure the monitoring of budget expenditures and the allocation of the budget. In addition, each year, before the approval of the annual accounts by the Ordinary General Assembly, the Board shall report to the GA on the determination of the amount of annual Membership fee (Art. 5.3 and Art. 18).

The Membership fee is the sole means to finance the activities of our Association and the operational and personnel costs associated with the APEEE Secretariat. The last modification of the Membership fee was in the 2018/2019 budget, when it was set at 50 EUR per family. Since then, the increase in prices and salaries, especially in 2022 due to the energy crisis, eroded the financial foundations of our Association and led to negative financial results.

On 15 November 2022, the Board examined the Budget proposal for 2022/2023 and discussed the necessity of raising the APEEE Membership fee. After a constructive discussion, the Board decided not to propose an increase the Membership fee but to reevaluate the situation in Spring 2023. Accordingly, in May 2023 the Board decided to convene an extraordinary GA to vote for an increase of the Membership fee for the 2023/2024 year. This decision takes into account that the economic situation has not improved in Belgium: the inflation rate remained 5.60% in April 2023; after reaching 12% in October 2022.

Therefore, the Board proposes that the annual APEEE Membership fee is raised to 55 EUR per family and that the raise of the fee is applied for the 2023/2024 academic year. This 10% increase is necessary to ensure the financial stability of our Association and to cover all operational, personnel, accounting and legal charges.

Viktor HAUKE
APEEE Treasurer



Annex: Response to Questions

1. Why are we raising fees?

The APEEE has run a loss for the last four years (since 2019/2020). This situation has already cut into our reserves and if not addressed, it could put the Association at risk. A part of this loss was due to one-off situations, including staff redundancy, the changeover in our working methods due to COVID, and expenses related to the mandatory revision of our statutes. On the other hand, the APEEE, like any other organisation, is impacted by inflation across all our working areas. Like all Belgian organisations, we are obliged to give our staff a salary increase in line with the nationally-determined indexation, which reached 11.08% in January 2023.

At the December 2022 General Assembly, the APEEE Board already shared these concerns with Membership but postponed raising fees and determined instead to monitor the situation over the rest of the school year. The Board promised at that time to call an extraordinary General Assembly before the June APEEE subscription period if fees needed to be increased for next year's budget.

At the APEEE Board meeting of 8 May 2023, the APEEE Treasurer, in consultation with the Presidency and Bureau (leadership committee), presented his findings, and the Board voted to bring a proposal to raise the APEEE fee by 5 EUR (i.e. 10%) in advance of next year's subscription.

2. What does the APEEE do for parents? How is it different from the APEEE Services?

The APEEE AISBL is the official parent representative body at EEBl. The APEEE Services ASBL is an organisation run by the APEEE voting members, whose job is to provide needed school-related services to families. They are two separate associations with different objectives and different governance structures in line with their objectives.¹

The European Schools work under a model of stakeholder governance, and the Convention of the European Schools assigns the APEEE, as the sole recognised body representing parents at the school, certain powers and obligations. According to the Convention and other system and school governing documents, the APEEE is obliged to represent EEBl parents at:

- EEBl Administrative Boards (2 times / year)

¹ APEEE Statutes, Article 2. L'Association a pour but:

- 1) de prendre et de favoriser toute initiative qui permette la participation la plus large des parents à la vie de l'Ecole sous toutes ses formes et aux décisions y afférentes ;
- 2) de représenter les intérêts éducatifs et familiaux des parents auprès de l'Ecole et des instances communales, régionales et européennes ;
- 3) de faire connaître aux autorités de l'Ecole les vœux des parents et leurs suggestions relatives à l'organisation scolaire ;
- 4) d'organiser, en liaison avec le Conseil d'administration de l'Ecole des activités périscolaires ;
- 5) de contribuer à résoudre tout autre problème qui se pose aux parents pour l'éducation de leurs enfants ;
- 6) d'assurer une information suffisante des parents sur les décisions ou dé libérations des diverses autorités compétentes concernant l'Ecole ;
- 7) de promouvoir les liens et, le cas échéant, d'établir une collaboration directe avec les Associations de Parents d'Elèves des autres Ecoles européennes notamment avec celles dont le siège est dans l'agglomération bruxelloise.



- EEBI School Advisory Council (2-4 times / year)
- EEBI Councils of Education, 3 separate bodies (4 times / year)
- EEBI Safety and Hygiene Committee (3-4 times / year)
- Brussels Central Enrolment Authority (8-10 times / year)
- Brussels Steering Committee (2-4 times / year)

The APEEE must send the required number of representatives to these periodic meetings in order to vet and approve (in parents' name) the various files presented as well as to raise parents' concerns, as appropriate to each forum. The APEEE also sends delegates to INTERPARENTS, which represents the Association in the European Schools Board of Governors and its preparatory committees and working groups.²

In accordance with its Statutes, the APEEE also undertakes other activities related to improving school life in a variety of areas, specifically through dedicated APEEE and school working groups and tasks forces and through support of parent initiatives.

Finally, the APEEE advocates for individual families, classes and sections when they confront challenges in the classroom, school or system.

3. Why do we need fees? What are the fees used for?

The APEEE's work relies essentially on the free-of-charge involvement of volunteer parents who devote their time and energy to defending families' interests and organising activities. Yet, the Association must have sufficient financial resources to support its functioning as a Belgian AISBL, and the Association must staff its Secretariat in order to carry out the administrative and communication work that help it meet its organisational objectives and keep it connected with its parent base.

The APEEE fees primarily cover:

- the cost of our permanent APEEE Secretariat staff
- the daily functioning and supply of the Secretariat office as well as development and maintenance of our online communication platforms
- costs imposed by the Belgian regulatory environment (contractual requirements and benefits), annual reporting requirement by the *Moniteur Belge*, GDPR compliance, legal fees, etc.³

Our Secretariat works with the Presidency, Bureau (leadership team) and Board to support the APEEE's important role in stakeholder governance and performs other duties to support parents, families and the improvement of school life. These include:

² The APEEE sends 2-4 delegates to INTERPARENTS to attend 6 annual preparatory meetings for the European Schools Board of Governors and its standing committees, as well as numerous additional meetings on dossiers of interest to our EEBI parents (Language education, Special education needs, Secondary assessment / BAC, School trips, Language education, Digital education, Career guidance, Education for sustainable development, Educational reform, etc.).

³ As an example, this year our fees were used to cover the quite heavy legal costs of an update to the APEEE statutes to bring them in line with new Belgian regulations on ASBLs/AISBLs, and to better integrate and regularise the Berkendael parent representation to ensure equity across both sites.



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- facilitating the annual inscription and election processes
 - preparing, supporting and reporting our monthly Board and annual General Assembly meetings
 - supporting the consultation of parents and Class Representatives on key Board-related issues
 - providing daily aid and information to parents
 - communicating general news and announcements of interest to parents
 - supporting the work of APEEE working groups and APEEE's funded projects (e.g. well-being initiatives, school fete, hoodie sales, drugs interventions, primary robotics, digital safety, Ocean's Project / Francis Pirotta Prize)

In the end, it is the duty of the Board and ultimately our Membership to ensure that the APEEE can function smoothly and meet its governance, administrative and legal duties and its duty of service to our parent body. The Secretariat, which is funded through APEEE fees, is a key instrument in this.

4. Why can't we just cut costs? Do we need to keep this level of staffing and expenditure?

The APEEE currently employs two part-time staff for a total of 50 hours / week. They perform two separate roles: Administration & Finance and Information & Communication. Even with 50 hours, the staff are stretched in serving a Board of 26 members and the daily needs of over 2500 families across two sites and eleven sections.

In the meantime, we have also postponed several larger-scale projects that will eventually need to be undertaken, including the update of our mail server and web platform, which are both running on outdated legacy systems and remain unstable, slow and/or unsecure.

5. Why do we need to raise the fees when we still have money on the books?

Like every formal organisation or business, the APEEE needs to keep a certain amount of reserve to be able to fulfil its legal responsibilities in case of unforeseen circumstance. In the worst case, the APEEE should make sure that it can meet its obligations in case of liquidation, which are almost wholly related to contractual obligations to our staff. The reserves also ensure that we can continue to function when unforeseen circumstances arise—staffing issues, major technical issues or equipment failure, regulatory or legal impositions or challenges, etc. In short, our reserves allow the organisation to function sustainably, and as a General Assembly, it is our job to ensure that the organisation remains viable.

Our Treasurer has strongly recommended that the APEEE keep a reserve commensurate with one year of staff cost. We are already predicted to dip below this point as of September 2023.



6. Why do we have to decide now?

We need to decide now in advance of the 2023/2024 subscription period for APEEE Membership and services delivered by the APEEE Services (canteen, transport, extra-curricular activities and after-school care), which are subject to prior payment of the APEEE Membership fee. Subscription will take place in June. It was agreed in the December 2022 General Assembly to hold off before raising fees for next year until we could better understand the longer-term effects of the current inflationary cycle on our budget. The Board has analysed the situation over the past months and has decided to recommend a raise in fees. If this fee rise is not voted in and given our fixed costs, the APEEE will almost surely run a loss again next year. A situation which will also risk reducing the level of support provided by the Secretariat.