



ACCREDITED EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

AES Conference 2026

Unfolding Europe's Future Through Education

The potential of the AES schools

23 – 25 September 2026

BRUSSELS & WATERLOO

PARTICIPANTS' BOOKLET

Hosted by École Européenne Bruxelles-Argenteuil (EEBA) for the AES network,
under the aegis of the Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools
(OSG).

PARTICIPANTS' BOOKLET

Contents

WELCOME

A word of welcome	3
--------------------------	----------

Félix de Merode, host of the conference

The conference at a glance	4
-----------------------------------	----------

Three days, three venues

PROGRAMME

Wednesday 23 September	5
-------------------------------	----------

Welcome evening · Château d'Argenteuil, Waterloo

Thursday 24 September	6
------------------------------	----------

Conference day · European Parliament

Speakers	7
-----------------	----------

Who is on stage on Thursday

Working sessions	8
-------------------------	----------

Categories, rooms and what each group produces

Thursday evening	9
-------------------------	----------

Walking dinner "Great Belgium" · Palais d'Egmont

Friday 25 September	10
----------------------------	-----------

Closing day · Palais d'Egmont

Educational Initiatives Fair	11
-------------------------------------	-----------

A marketplace of European opportunities

PRACTICAL

Practical information	12
------------------------------	-----------

Access, transport, meals, dress code, contacts

BACKGROUND

The places we gather	13
-----------------------------	-----------

Waterloo, the Château, the Parliament, the Egmont Palace

The AES network	16
------------------------	-----------

Who we are, what we ask

How the system works	18
-----------------------------	-----------

The governing bodies, and how the AES connect to them

Key reference documents	19
--------------------------------	-----------

The texts behind the discussion

The reference documents in brief	20
---	-----------

What each text says, and what it is useful for

PEOPLE

Participants	23
---------------------	-----------

Schools, the Office of the Secretary-General and national delegations

Notes	26
--------------	-----------

Pages for the working sessions

A WORD OF WELCOME

Welcoming you to the AES Conference 2026

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with great pleasure and a real sense of anticipation that I welcome you to the AES Conference 2026, hosted here at the École Européenne Bruxelles-Argenteuil for the wider community of Accredited European Schools.

Our theme, “*Unfolding Europe's Future Through Education*,” reflects what I believe our network represents at its best: schools that apply the same demanding curriculum and the same European ambition as the historical European Schools, while remaining rooted in their own national systems and communities. That dual identity is our strength, and it is also, still too often, the source of a structural imbalance that this conference sets out to address, constructively and together with our institutional partners.

Over these three days, we move between three places that each say something about Europe's own unfolding story: the Château d'Argenteuil, where EEBA has made its home; the European Parliament, the house of Europe's directly elected voice; and the Palais d'Egmont, a place where the map of Europe has itself been redrawn more than once. This booklet gathers, in one place, everything you should need to find your way between them — the full programme, practical details, a short introduction to the history of each of these places, and a summary of what the AES network is formally asking of the European Schools System.

I am delighted that so many of our institutional partners, delegations, school communities and parent representatives have chosen to make the journey to be with us. My thanks go in advance to all of you for the energy, and the goodwill, that you bring to this conference.

I look forward to welcoming you personally at the Château d'Argenteuil on the evening of 23 September.

With warm regards,

Félix de Merode

Director, École Européenne Bruxelles-Argenteuil (EEBA)

Host, AES Conference 2026

THE CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

Three days, three venues

An evening of welcome in Waterloo, a full working day in the European Parliament, and a closing morning at the Palais d'Egmont.

Wednesday 23 September

CHÂTEAU D'ARGENTEUIL

From 17:00

Arrival, welcome desk and conference packs

18:00

Guided tour of the château and its park

18:45

Words of welcome

19:00

Cocktail dinner and inauguration party

Later

Europa Band — live concert

22:00

End of the evening

Thursday 24 September

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

08:00

Accreditation and security check

09:00

Opening remarks

09:15

History and origins of the European Schools

10:15

The Commission and the AES network today

11:30

Round table of stakeholders

14:00

European opportunities for education

16:00

Working sessions by category

19:30

Walking dinner at the Palais d'Egmont

Friday 25 September

PALAIS D'EGMONT

08:30

Welcome coffee and registration

09:00

Words from the host

09:15

Mixed stakeholder working sessions

10:30

Coffee break and Initiatives Fair

11:30

Plenary: working session conclusions

12:30

Handover to Luxembourg

13:00

Lunch and Initiatives Fair

14:00

End of the conference

ONE THREAD THROUGH THE THREE DAYS

Thursday's category groups and Friday's mixed groups are the working heart of the conference. Each group is asked to agree a small number of key messages, which are presented in Friday's closing plenary and carried forward into the AES roadmap.

DAY ONE · WELCOME EVENING

Wednesday 23 September

Château d'Argenteuil · 5 Square d'Argenteuil, 1410 Waterloo
Dress code: casual. Dinner is provided.

16:00

Departure from Brussels

Dedicated buses leave Square de Meeûs — bus stop “Science / Wetenschap”

From 17:00

Arrival of participants

Welcome desk, badges and conference packs

18:00

Guided tour of the Château d'Argenteuil and its park

Optional — guided by students of the school

18:45

Words of welcome

Félix de Merode, Director of EEBA and host of the conference · Tanguy Stuckens, Deputy-President of the Provincial College of Walloon Brabant

19:00

Cocktail dinner and inauguration party

Dinner and informal networking at the château

During
dinner**Live music by the Europa Band**

Smooth jazz and background music

Later

Europa Band — live concert

The evening gradually turns into a concert

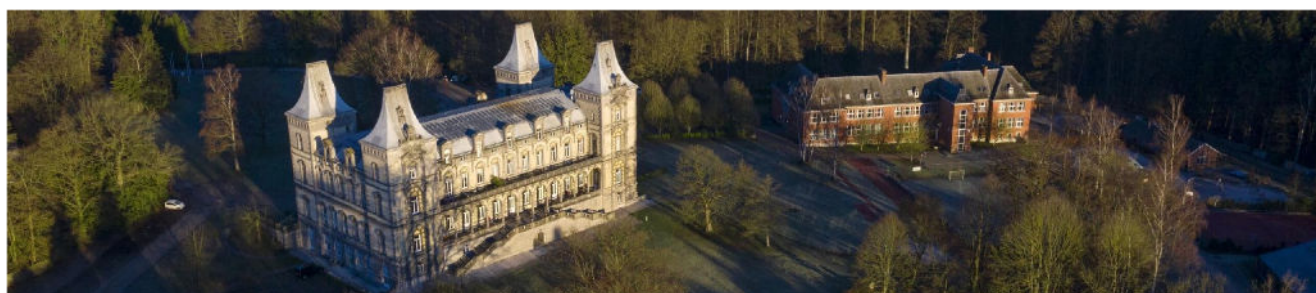
22:00

End of the evening

Return transport to Brussels

GETTING THERE AND BACK

Buses depart from **Square de Meeûs** (stop “Science / Wetenschap”) in central Brussels at 16:00 — from the square named after Count Ferdinand de Meeûs d'Argenteuil to the château he built. Alternatively, shuttles run between **Waterloo station** and the château every 20 minutes from 18:30 to 19:30. For anything transport-related during the evening, a WhatsApp line is open on **+32 494 49 54 75**.



The Château d'Argenteuil and its estate on the edge of the Sonian Forest, home of the École Européenne Bruxelles-Argenteuil.

DAY TWO · CONFERENCE DAY

Thursday 24 September

European Parliament · Rue Wiertz 60, 1047 Brussels · Spinelli building, room 3G3

Dress code: business attire. Bring the same ID document you submitted at registration.

08:00	Arrival Accreditation and security check at the European Parliament
08:30	Welcome coffee Informal welcome before the opening session
09:00	Opening remarks Monika Van Geit, Belgian Delegation · Félix de Merode, host of the conference
09:15	History and origins of the European Schools Catherine Roba-Rabier, former Belgian Delegation
10:15	Address by the European Commission Christian Linder, Director – Finance, Legal & Partnerships (HR.F), DG Human Resources and Security
10:30	The AES network today Andreas Beckmann, Secretary-General of the European Schools (OSG)
11:00	Coffee break
11:30	Round table of stakeholders A voice for each part of the network — student, teacher, director, parent, Commission, Parliament and delegation. Moderated by Tom Nober, LLIS Junglinster
12:45	Lunch break
14:00	European opportunities for education A shared session with four speakers on stage: PISA · Erasmus+ · ECIT · eTwinning
15:30	Coffee break
16:00	Working sessions by category Directors · Deputy Heads · Teachers · Students · Parents · Delegations & Agencies — see the next pages for rooms
17:30	End of the conference day The evening continues at the Palais d'Egmont

THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

Speakers

The morning moves from where the European Schools come from, to where the network stands today; the afternoon opens the floor to the European programmes that AES schools can draw on.

Catherine Roba-Rabier

HISTORY AND ORIGINS OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

Former Belgian Delegation

Christian Linder

ADDRESS BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Director – Finance, Legal & Partnerships (HR.F),
Directorate-General for Human Resources and
Security, European Commission

Andreas Beckmann

THE AES NETWORK TODAY

Secretary-General of the European Schools (OSG)

Tom Nober

MODERATOR, ROUND TABLE OF STAKEHOLDERS

Director, Lënster Lycée International School,
Junglinster

ROUND TABLE OF STAKEHOLDERS · 11:30

Seven perspectives on the same network: a student, a teacher, a director, a parent, the Commission, the Parliament and a national delegation. Opening statements are deliberately short, so that most of the session is exchange — including with the floor.

European opportunities for education · 14:00

Károly Pála

PISA

Executive Coordinator to the Secretary-General,
OSG

Jacqueline Pacaud

ERASMUS+

European opportunities for mobility and
cooperation

Suzana Carp

ECIT

European citizenship and education

Amy Burnett

eTwinning

European school collaboration

THE WORKING HEART OF THE CONFERENCE

Working sessions

On Thursday you work with your peers; on Friday you work across categories. Both days feed the same closing plenary.

Thursday 16:00 — by category

European Parliament, Spinelli building. Please go directly to your room at the end of the coffee break.

CATEGORY	ROOM	MODERATOR
Directors	1G1	Félix de Merode
Deputy Heads	5G1	Laetitia d'Oreye and Florence Cambier
Teachers	5G365	Charlotte Poma
Parents	5G375	Tsjitske Tubbs
Students	5G305	Rohan Jakkinapalli and Rayaana Appels
Delegations & agencies	5G315	Henry Stevenson

Friday 09:15 — mixed stakeholder sessions

Friday's groups deliberately mix roles and backgrounds — a director, a teacher, a parent, a student and an institutional representative around the same table — so that each set of conclusions has been tested against the other perspectives before it reaches the plenary. Groups finalise their reflections from 11:00 and present them from 11:30.

WHAT EACH GROUP IS ASKED TO PRODUCE

Three key messages, agreed by the group and presented by one rapporteur. Keep them concrete enough to be acted on: a message that names what should change, who should change it and by when is worth more than a statement of principle. These messages are what the closing plenary debates and what the AES roadmap for 2026–2027 is built from.

A note on the round table

The round table on Thursday morning and the working sessions are designed as two halves of the same conversation. The round table puts the questions on the table in front of the institutions; the working sessions are where the network answers them in its own words.

DAY TWO · EVENING PROGRAMME

Thursday evening at the Palais d'Egmont

Palais d'Egmont · Place du Petit Sablon 8, 1000 Brussels
Participants are invited to wear business attire.

19:30**Walking dinner “Great Belgium”**

A walking dinner through the reception rooms of the palace — Belgian produce, Belgian cooking, and the chance to meet colleagues from every school in the network



The Palais d'Egmont seen from above: the cour d'honneur and the wings that enclose it, between the Place du Petit Sablon and the Egmont park.

Finding your way

The Palais d'Egmont stands just off the Place du Petit Sablon, a ten-minute walk from the Gare Centrale and roughly twenty-five minutes on foot from the European Parliament. The nearest metro stations are Louise and Porte de Namur; tram 92 and 93 and several bus lines stop at Petit Sablon.

Guests are asked to arrive together at the start of the evening, as access to the palace is controlled and badges are checked at the entrance. Please keep your conference badge visible.

WHY THIS PALACE

It was here, on 22 January 1972, that Denmark, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom signed their treaties of accession to the European Communities — the first enlargement beyond the founding six. A short history of the building is on page 15.

DAY THREE · CLOSING DAY

Friday 25 September

Palais d'Egmont · Place du Petit Sablon 8, 1000 Brussels
Dress code: casual. Lunch is provided.

08:30 **Welcome coffee and registration**

09:00 **Words from the host**

Félix de Merode, EEBA

09:15 **Mixed stakeholder working sessions**

Participants from different roles and backgrounds exchange perspectives and develop shared conclusions

10:30 Coffee break and Educational Initiatives Fair

11:00 **Working sessions: conclusions**

Groups finalise their reflections and prepare the conclusions to be shared in plenary

11:30 **Plenary session: working session conclusions**

Presentation and shared discussion of the conclusions from each group

12:30 **Handover to Luxembourg**

The AES Conference 2027 passes to the Lënster Lycée International School, Junglinster

13:00 Lunch and Educational Initiatives Fair

14:00 **End of the conference**

Departures



The Salle Arenberg, where Friday's plenary sessions are held.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Take a moment at the Initiatives Fair during the morning break or over lunch – the stands are the quickest way to collect contacts and concrete ideas to bring back to your school.

EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES FAIR

A marketplace of European opportunities

Learning innovation and school-led initiatives for the AES network. Scan the codes to discover each initiative, collect contacts, and bring back ideas for your school community.

Erasmus+

EU opportunities for mobility, cooperation and partnerships in education, training, youth and sport.



eTwinning

Safe European platform for school collaboration, online projects and teacher networking.



ECIT

European citizenship, civic participation and rights through dialogue and school engagement.



Out of the Books

Festival dedicated to pedagogical innovation — conferences, workshops and educational inspiration.



EcoReps

Student-led sustainability action inspired by the Eco-Schools global network.



Beyond Stigma Initiative

Mental-health awareness and inclusive conversations: turning stigma into solidarity.



Rail Trip Travel

Low-carbon travel experiences by train, connecting pupils with Europe through the journey itself.



NCUK & Uni Foundation

International Foundation Year: pathways towards undergraduate university study worldwide.



Also presenting

PISA

International student assessment, with Károly Pála (OSG).

EdTech

Digital-learning guidance, with Guillaume Martel.

From European mobility to wellbeing, sustainability, digital learning and university pathways — concrete ideas to enrich the AES experience. The fair is open during the coffee and lunch breaks on Friday.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED ON THE DAY

Practical information

Access and security

For access to the European Parliament, participants must bring the same valid identity card or passport submitted during registration. Temporary identity cards are not accepted. Allow time for the security check: accreditation opens at 08:00.

Transport and shuttles

On Wednesday, dedicated buses depart from Square de Meeûs (stop “Science / Wetenschap”) for the Château d’Argenteuil. Shuttles also run between Waterloo station and the château every 20 minutes from 18:30 to 19:30. On Thursday and Friday, participants make their own way to the venues in central Brussels.

Meals

Dinner on Wednesday evening, lunch and dinner on Thursday, and lunch on Friday are provided as part of the conference programme.

Dress code

Thursday, at the European Parliament and for the evening at the Palais d’Egmont: business attire. Wednesday and Friday: casual.

On site

Please wear your conference badge at all times. Wi-Fi details are available at the welcome desk. Photography and video recording may take place during the event for communication purposes.

Venues

Wed · Château d’Argenteuil, 5 Square d’Argenteuil, 1410 Waterloo
Thu · European Parliament, Rue Wiertz 60, 1047 Brussels — Spinelli 3G3
Thu eve & Fri · Palais d’Egmont, Place du Petit Sablon 8, 1000 Brussels

Contact during the conference

Félix de Merode	fm@eeba.be	+32 488 24 23 05
Clara Jutten	cjutten@eeba.be	+32 494 49 54 75
Laetitia d’Oreye	ldoreye@eeba.be	+32 474 65 88 57
Pierre-Paul Fiévé	pfieve@eeba.be	+32 488 47 05 85
Henry Stevenson	admin@eeba.be	+32 473 97 40 52

Additional practical details may be announced at the welcome desk as they are confirmed by the organising team.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PLACES WE GATHER

Waterloo and the Belgian monarchy

Each of the three days of this conference unfolds in a place that carries its own layer of European history. What follows is offered simply as context — a few landmarks to recognise as you move between Waterloo and Brussels.

Waterloo and its battle

Waterloo is a quiet town in Walloon Brabant, some fifteen kilometres south of Brussels, on the edge of the Sonian Forest. It gave its name to European history's most famous single day of fighting: on 18 June 1815, the army of Napoleon Bonaparte was defeated here by the Anglo-allied forces under the Duke of Wellington and a Prussian army under Field Marshal von Blücher, bringing to a close some twenty-three years of almost continuous war between France and the rest of Europe.

The battle is widely regarded as one of the true hinges of European history, opening a long period of relative peace among the continent's great powers. Visitors today can still climb the Lion's Mound, an artificial hill raised in 1820 on the spot where the Prince of Orange was said to have been wounded, and visit the nearby Wellington Museum. Waterloo itself has since become a green residential town on Brussels' southern edge — home, among other things, to the Argenteuil estate where this conference opens.

Belgium and its monarchy

Belgium declared its independence in 1830 and established itself, the following year, as a hereditary constitutional monarchy. On 21 July 1831, Leopold I — a German prince of the House of Saxe-Coburg — swore the constitutional oath that made him the first King of the Belgians, a title chosen deliberately to signal that the Crown's legitimacy flows from the nation rather than the reverse.

Since then, seven monarchs have succeeded to the throne — Leopold I, Leopold II, Albert I, Leopold III, Baudouin, Albert II and, since 2013, King Philippe — each acceding through a civil oath before Parliament rather than a religious coronation. As a constitutional and, since 1993, federal monarchy, the King's role today is chiefly unifying and representative: appointing the government formed by the elected Parliament and embodying continuity across the country's linguistic communities. 21 July, the anniversary of Leopold I's oath, remains Belgium's National Day.

The monarchy's own history brushes directly against this conference's opening venue: King Leopold III made the wider Argenteuil estate his home after his abdication, residing there with Princess Lilian from the early 1960s until her death in 2002.

WHERE YOU ARE

Waterloo lies about fifteen kilometres south of Brussels, at the northern edge of Walloon Brabant. The Château d'Argenteuil sits within a wooded estate on the boundary of the Sonian Forest, the last remnant of the ancient forest that once covered much of central Belgium.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PLACES WE GATHER

The Château d'Argenteuil and the European Parliament

The Château d'Argenteuil

The Château d'Argenteuil, this conference's opening venue, sits within a wooded estate that has changed hands, and character, several times over almost two centuries. The domain takes its name from a small stream, the Argentine, that once ran through it. In 1831, Count Ferdinand de Meeûs, a governor of the Société Générale de Belgique, acquired the land; he began building a first château in 1837, only for it to be destroyed by fire in 1847, almost as soon as it was completed. The estate gave the family the name it still carries — de Meeûs d'Argenteuil — and the square in the Leopold quarter of Brussels from which the conference buses leave on Wednesday carries it too.

A second château — the one that stands today — was raised on the same site between 1856 and 1858 by the architect Jean-Pierre Cluysenaar, in a French Renaissance style flanked by four square towers. In the twentieth century the wider estate was divided: one part became the Royal Domain of Argenteuil, the residence of King Leopold III described on the previous page; the château itself later housed a Scandinavian school, from 1992 to 2020, before becoming home to the École Européenne Bruxelles-Argenteuil. It is this building and its park, on the edge of the Sonian Forest, that welcome delegates on the conference's opening evening.

The European Parliament

The European Parliament traces its origins to the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community, and grew, with the creation of the European Economic Community, into the European Parliamentary Assembly that held its first session in Strasbourg on 19 March 1958. Renamed the European Parliament in 1962 and directly elected for the first time in 1979, it has grown from a consultative body of appointed delegates into a directly elected co-legislator that today shares law-making power with the Council of the EU across almost every policy field, including education and youth programmes such as Erasmus+.

Following a 1992 decision of the EU's member governments, the Parliament's work is divided across three cities: Strasbourg, where its formal plenary sessions are held; Luxembourg, seat of its administrative secretariat; and Brussels, where committees, political groups and an increasing share of parliamentary business take place. It is in the Parliament's Brussels premises, in the Spinelli building, that Thursday's conference session is held — a fitting setting for a network of schools built, from the outset, on the idea of European cooperation in education.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PLACES WE GATHER

Le Palais d'Egmont

Just off Brussels' Sablon, the Palais d'Egmont has stood, in one form or another, for close to five centuries. The first residence was built from 1548 for Countess Françoise of Luxembourg and her son, Lamoral, Count of Egmont — a nobleman and statesman whose execution in 1568, on the orders of the Duke of Alba, made him an early symbol of resistance to Spanish rule in the Low Countries.

The palace stayed within the Egmont family until the eighteenth century, when it passed to the Dukes of Arenberg, who considerably enlarged and remodelled it, adding the Directoire-style library and the white-and-gold ballroom now known as the Hall of Mirrors. A fire in 1892 destroyed part of the building, which was rebuilt in matching style by 1910. The City of Brussels acquired the palace in 1918; a further fire in 1927, and the cost of its upkeep, eventually led the Belgian State to take it over in 1964 and restore it as a venue for diplomacy.

It was here, at the Palais d'Egmont, on 22 January 1972, that Denmark, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom signed their treaties of accession to the European Communities — the enlargement that first carried the Community beyond its founding six members. Today the palace belongs to Belgium's Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, and continues to host precisely the kind of high-level European gathering that brings this conference to its close.

THREE VENUES, ONE ARGUMENT

A château that a national school has made into a European one; a parliament that grew from an appointed assembly into Europe's elected voice; a palace where the Community first enlarged beyond its founders. The AES network's own case — that European education should widen beyond the population it was first designed for — is written into the buildings this conference moves through.

What is an Accredited European School?

A national school authorised to deliver a European curriculum — and the questions that dual identity raises.

An Accredited European School (AES) is a national school authorised by the Board of Governors of the European Schools to deliver the same curriculum — and, in most cases, the same European Baccalaureate — as the fully-fledged European Schools, while remaining legally, administratively and financially under its own Member State's system. The AES concept emerged from a 2005 European Parliament recommendation to widen access to European education beyond the historical Type I Schools. There are currently 26 AES across 14 or more Member States, with several more in accreditation.

Seven questions on the table

1 • Bridges between AES and the traditional European Schools

AES apply the same curriculum, values and Baccalaureate as the fully-fledged European Schools while remaining inside national legal and administrative systems. Both the 2023 European Parliament CULT report and the OSG's own Action Plan call for closer structural cooperation — joint working groups, shared inspection, mutual representation — rather than symbolic gestures alone.

2 • Structural inequalities in governance

AES currently hold no voting rights in the Joint Teaching Committee and no seats in Board of Governors discussions on system architecture, even though they are bound by the same pedagogical standards as the European Schools. The AES network asks for full JTC voting rights and for BoG representation equal to that of the traditional Schools.

3 • Languages, pedagogy and the “dual pathway”

AES combine EU multilingual and multicultural standards with national frameworks, and are recognised as agile spaces for piloting digital learning, inclusion and alternative assessment. They also offer a legitimate national off-ramp for pupils who do not continue on to the European Baccalaureate itself.

4 • The “lighthouse” ambition

Both the Mission and Vision document and the AES network's own texts frame AES-driven innovation as something that should feed back into the wider European Schools System — a testing ground whose results strengthen the whole network, not a parallel track running alongside it.

Seven questions on the table

5 · A fairer cost-neutrality model

AES already function, in practice, as a public service financed through their own Member States' education budgets — yet the System's cost-neutrality mechanism layers a second, distinct financial relationship on top of this. Two elements remain unclear to the schools themselves: the basis on which OSG staff time attributed to AES is costed, and what concrete service the per-pupil contribution is intended to cover. The OSG's own Action Plan acknowledges that the cost-sharing arrangement needs review; the AES network's position is that this review should produce a genuinely fairer and more transparent formula.

6 · How involved should the institutions be?

The ask is for more clearly defined engagement — JTC votes, BoG seats, Baccalaureate reform working groups — not full legal absorption into the European Schools system. Governance models and legal status differ too widely between Member States for that to be realistic, or indeed desired.

7 · A widening gap between the Convention's purpose and the System's ambition?

Article 1 of the 1994 Convention states that the purpose of the Schools is to educate together the children of the staff of the European Communities. It adds that other children may attend “within the limits set by the Board of Governors”. Since 2005, however, the European Parliament has called for European education to be opened well beyond that original population, and the System's own strategic documents now treat that opening as a priority: the Mission and Vision commits to expanding the model across all Member States, and the Multi-Annual Plan makes enlarging the AES family an explicit focus area.

The Board of Governors derives its mandate from a Convention whose purpose clause was written for a different population. If the System intends to grow principally through the AES, the institutional architecture supporting that growth deserves to be examined alongside the ambition itself.

WHAT THE AES NETWORK IS FORMALLY ASKING FOR

Per the official AES Position Paper (2026), addressed to the governing bodies of the European Schools System:

1. Full voting rights for AES in the Joint Teaching Committee (JTC).
2. AES representation in Board of Governors (BoG) discussions on system architecture.
3. AES experts integrated into European Baccalaureate reform working groups.
4. Systematic AES consultation on any organisational or financial change affecting them, including cost neutrality.
5. An annual AES Policy & Innovation Forum and a public AES Contribution Report, to make AES achievements visible to ministries and EU institutions.

How the European Schools system works

The governing bodies of the *Schola Europaea*, and how the Accredited European Schools connect to them

AES CONFERENCE 2026
HOSTED BY EEBA · BRUSSELS & WATERLOO
23–25 SEPTEMBER 2026

LEGAL BASIS

Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools, Luxembourg, 21 June 1994 — concluded between the Member States and the European Communities. The system is an intergovernmental organisation *sui generis*. Four organs are common to all the Schools (Art. 7): the **Board of Governors**, the **Secretary-General**, the **Boards of Inspectors** and the **Complaints Board**. Everything else — committees, working groups, accreditation — is built by decision of the Board of Governors.

Consultative voices

Heard, not deciding

- **ISTC** — Inter-School Teaching Staff Committee; the teachers' seat on the Board of Governors.
- **InterParents** — the parents' associations; the parents' seat.
- **CoSup** — pupils of the European Schools; speaks in the Joint Teaching Committee.
- **CoSEEA** — pupils of the accredited schools; in the Joint Teaching Committee, without a vote.

Board of Governors — the supreme decision-making body

Art. 8 · meets at least once a year, in practice twice

WHO SITS ON IT

- Ministerial-level representative of **each Member State** (in practice senior officials)
- The **European Commission**
- **European agencies** financing the system (EPO, EUIPO, EIB, ECB, Eurocontrol)
- One **teaching staff** and one **parents'** representative

- Sole jurisdiction, **in first and final instance**, over disputes on the application of the Convention.
- Reviews the **legality of the acts** of the organs of the Schools.
- Members of recognised legal competence and full independence.
- Final stage of appeals against **European Baccalaureate** procedure — for pupils of accredited schools too.

Complaints Board

Art. 27 · independent

- Sole jurisdiction, **in first and final instance**, over disputes on the application of the Convention.
- Reviews the **legality of the acts** of the organs of the Schools.
- Members of recognised legal competence and full independence.
- Final stage of appeals against **European Baccalaureate** procedure — for pupils of accredited schools too.

PREPARATORY COMMITTEES — NO DECISION REACHES THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS WITHOUT PASSING THROUGH THEM

Joint Teaching Committee

Pedagogical matters

- Inspectors, Directors, representatives of teachers, parents and pupils, the Commission, the agencies and the **Accredited European Schools**.
- Examines every pedagogical or system-wide proposal; prepares the syllabuses.
- Works through standing **working groups**.
- Examines the **Dossier of Conformity** of a school seeking accreditation.

Budgetary Committee

Financial matters

- Financial experts of the Member States, the European Commission and the European Patent Office.
- Examines the **financial implications** of every educational proposal.
- Examines the budgets of the schools and of the OSG.
- Reports to the Board of Governors, which alone adopts the budget.

Boards of Inspectors

Art. 17 · quality assurance

- One inspector per country, in two boards — **nursery & primary** and **secondary**; sitting together they form the **Joint Board of Inspectors**.
- School inspections, appraisal of teachers, pedagogical support and in-service training.
- Give opinions to the Board of Governors on curricula and the organisation of studies.
- Carry out the **accreditation audits** and their renewal.

Secretary-General & Office (OSG)

Art. 14 · Brussels, some 100 staff

- **Represents the Board of Governors** and exercises its powers between sessions.
- Nine units — among them Pedagogical Development, European Baccalaureate, Human Resources and Accounts.
- **Chairs the Administrative Board** of every European School.
- **Awards the European Baccalaureate** on behalf of the Board of Governors — in the accredited schools too.
- Organises the accreditation procedure and **signs the Accreditation Agreement**.

EXECUTIVE ARM

European Schools — "Type I"

Inside the legal, administrative and financial framework of the Convention

13 SCHOOLS · **6 COUNTRIES** · **≈ 29 000 PUPILS**

GOVERNANCE OF THE SCHOOL

- **Administrative Board** (Art. 19), chaired by the Secretary-General; the Director, the Commission, two teachers, two parents, one administrative staff member.
- Draws up the school's budget and oversees its execution.
- The **Director** is appointed by the Board of Governors; teaching staff are seconded by the Member States.

WHO PAYS

- Member States, through the **secondment** of their teachers.
- A **balancing contribution from the EU budget**.
- School fees for pupils of categories II and III.
- Staff, buildings and finances all answer to the central bodies.

Accredited European Schools — the AES network

Outside that framework — inside the national school systems

24 SCHOOLS · **14 MEMBER STATES** · **17 083 PUPILS (2025–26)**

GOVERNANCE OF THE SCHOOL

- Run by a **national authority or an organising body** of the host Member State, under its own legal form and board.
- No Administrative Board chaired by the Secretary-General; the **national inspector** is the link with the system.
- Teachers' qualifications are validated by the **national quality-assurance authority**.
- Represented in the Joint Teaching Committee; pupils through CoSEEA.

WHAT BINDS IT TO THE SYSTEM

- **Accreditation Agreement** (nursery to S5), signed by the Secretary-General, three years renewable.
- **Additional Agreement** for S6–S7 and the European Baccalaureate.
- Same syllabuses; marking scale, promotion criteria and language conditions.
- Administration and funding are the responsibility of the host Member State; an annual contribution is paid to the OSG.

COMMON TO BOTH

The same syllabuses, marking scale and promotion criteria, and the same **European Baccalaureate** — examined under the same Regulations and awarded by the Secretary-General. The diploma does not say which of the two families of schools issued it.

BECOMING — AND REMAINING — AN ACCREDITED SCHOOL

- General Interest File**
Submitted by the Member State · Joint Board of Inspectors · Board of Governors (two-thirds)

- Dossier of Conformity**
Presented by the school · Joint Teaching Committee · Board of Governors (two-thirds)

- Audit**
Self-evaluation, expert analysis and an in-school audit by a team of the Joint Board of Inspectors

- Accreditation Agreement**
Signed by the Secretary-General after approval by the Board of Governors · pedagogical equivalence

- Renewal every three years**
Applied for 18 months before expiry · renewal audit · decision of the Board of Governors

FOR THE WORKING SESSIONS

Key reference documents

The legal and institutional texts behind this conference, so that each group can ground its discussion in official sources.

D1 Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools

1994 · OJ L 212

The founding legal text: composition and powers of the Board of Governors, mission of the Schools.

eursc.eu/BasicTexts/SWI_21994A0817-en.pdf

D2 EP CULT Report — “System of European Schools: state of play, challenges and perspectives”

A9-0205/2023

Calls for a new ESS Charter, closer AES–OSG cooperation, expansion of AES to all Member States, and simpler accreditation rules.

europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0205_EN.html

D3 CULT research study underpinning the report

PE 699.647 · June 2022

Independent assessment of ESS governance, financing and AES status ahead of the 2023 resolution.

eursc.eu/Documents/EP_PE699_647_European_Schools_System_study.pdf

D4 OSG Action Plan — “Reflection on the Future of the ESS”

2024-01-D-30

The System’s formal response to Parliament. Flags cost-sharing rules for review; raises a possible shift to supranational governance.

eursc.eu/Documents/News/2024-01-D-30-en-4-Action Plan EP Report.pdf

D5 Parma Declaration — OSG follow-up to the EP resolution

2024-03-D-19

Welcomes the Parliament resolution and commits to “concrete and ambitious steps forward”.

eursc.eu/Documents/2024-03-D-19-en-2.pdf

D6 Mission and Vision of the European Schools

2025-02-D-1

The System’s current strategic self-definition — quality, inclusion, multilingualism, stakeholder participation.

eursc.eu/Documents/2025-02-D-1-en-6.pdf

D7 Multi-Annual Plan of the ESS 2025–2029

2025-01-D-46

Current five-year roadmap. States intent to expand the AES concept further, “although only if in the interest of Member States”.

eursc.eu/Documents/2025-01-D-46-en-4.pdf

D8 Regulations on Accredited European Schools

2024-12-D-32

The binding legal text governing AES accreditation, status and obligations.

eursc.eu/en/Accredited-European-Schools/official-documents

D9 Accredited European Schools — 2025–2026 Data Report

2025-11-D-16

Latest official figures: AES across Member States, pupil numbers, language sections.

eursc.eu/Documents/2025-11-D-16-en-2.pdf

D10 Position Paper of the Accredited European Schools

2026 · AES network

The network’s own call to action, explained on page 22 of this booklet.

europeanschool.be/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/AES-POSITION-PAPER.pdf

KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTS · D1–D10

The reference documents in brief

Ten texts frame the discussions of these three days: one founding treaty, two documents from the European Parliament, four in which the System sets out what it undertakes to do, two that describe where the network stands today, and one written by the network itself. These few lines explain what each of them says and what it is useful for. The full list, with references and links, is on the facing page.

D1 · THE FOUNDATION

The treaty that created the System and fixed its mission.

D2–D3 · PARLIAMENT

The 2023 resolution and the study behind it.

D4–D7 · UNDERTAKINGS

Action plan, follow-up, mission, five-year plan.

D8–D9 · WHERE WE STAND

The rules that bind AES, and the figures.

D10 · OUR PROPOSAL

The AES Position Paper and its five requests.

THE LEGAL FOUNDATION

D1 Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools · 1994, OJ L 212

The founding treaty, signed in Luxembourg on 21 June 1994 and in force since 1 October 2002. It replaced the Convention of 1957, created the four organs of the System — Board of Governors, Secretary-General, Boards of Inspectors, Complaints Board — and set the decision-making rules that still apply today. Article 1 states that the purpose of the Schools is to educate together the children of the staff of the European Communities, adding that other children may attend within the limits set by the Board of Governors.

IN THE DISCUSSIONS Governance, funding and expansion all derive from this text. Its purpose clause was drafted around the children of institutional staff; the System's current strategic documents plan growth principally through schools serving a wider population.

WHAT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ASKED FOR

D2 European Parliament CULT Report · A9-0205/2023

Parliament's own-initiative report on the System of European Schools, rapporteur Ilana Cicurel, adopted in plenary on 12 September 2023. It follows the Cavada resolution of 2011 and reaffirms the unique potential of the Schools as a laboratory for educational reform. For the AES network it calls for a new Charter for the System, closer cooperation between AES and the Office of the Secretary-General, expansion of the AES model to all Member States, and simpler, more transparent accreditation procedures.

IN THE DISCUSSIONS This is the most recent position adopted by an EU institution on the System and on the AES network. It dates from September 2023.

D3 CULT Research Study · PE 699.647, June 2022

The independent study commissioned by Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education, which underpins the resolution above. It assesses the governance, financing and legal architecture of the System, including the status of the Accredited European Schools, on the basis of evidence rather than advocacy.

IN THE DISCUSSIONS D2 sets out the requests; D3 is the evidence base behind them, including its analysis of the limits of purely intergovernmental decision-making.

KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTS · D1–D10

What the System has undertaken to do

D4 **OSG Action Plan — Reflection on the Future of the ESS** · 2024-01-D-30

The System's formal response to Parliament, approved in April 2024. Two points matter here. It identifies the rules on cost-sharing and financial contributions as requiring review, and it raises the possibility of moving from an intergovernmental towards a supranational form of governance.

IN THE DISCUSSIONS The review of the cost-sharing rules is an undertaking of the System itself, not a request from the network. The Action Plan sets out neither a methodology nor a timetable for it.

D5 **Parma Declaration — OSG follow-up to the EP Resolution** · 2024-03-D-19

The short political follow-up to the Action Plan. It welcomes the Parliament resolution and commits the System to concrete and ambitious steps forward.

IN THE DISCUSSIONS Short, but it is the commitment on the record. Two years separate it from this conference.

D6 **Mission and Vision of the European Schools** · 2025-02-D-1

Approved by the Board of Governors in June 2025, this is the System's current definition of itself: quality, inclusion, multilingualism, and the participation of stakeholders in decision-making.

IN THE DISCUSSIONS Stakeholder participation in decision-making is the System's own wording. AES are bound by the same pedagogical standards while holding no vote in the Joint Teaching Committee.

D7 **Multi-Annual Plan of the ESS 2025–2029** · 2025-01-D-46

The current five-year roadmap. It states the intention to expand the AES concept further, although only if this is in the interest of Member States.

IN THE DISCUSSIONS Expansion of the System now runs largely through the AES, which hold no vote in the Joint Teaching Committee and no seat in Board of Governors discussions on system architecture.

KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTS · D1–D10

Where the network stands — and what it proposes

D8 Regulations on Accredited European Schools · 2024-12-D-32

The binding text: what accreditation is, how it is obtained, renewed and withdrawn, what an Accredited European School must provide, and the obligations attached to the name. The five stages from the General Interest File to three-yearly renewal are set out here.

IN THE DISCUSSIONS Any change to AES status, representation or obligations takes effect through this text: it is the instrument that would have to be amended.

D9 Accredited European Schools — Data Report 2025–2026 · 2025-11-D-16

The official figures: 24 accredited schools across 14 Member States, 17 083 pupils in 2025–2026, together with language sections and growth trends.

IN THE DISCUSSIONS 24 accredited schools in 14 Member States, against 13 European Schools in 6 countries. On the objective of one accredited school per Member State, thirteen States have none.

WHAT THE NETWORK PROPOSES

D10 AES Position Paper · 2026

The only text in this pack written by the network itself. It sets out the purpose and strengths of the Accredited European Schools and then five concrete requests: full voting rights in the Joint Teaching Committee; AES representation in Board of Governors discussions on the architecture of the System; AES experts within the European Baccalaureate reform working groups; systematic consultation on any organisational or financial change affecting AES, cost neutrality included; and an annual AES Policy and Innovation Forum accompanied by a public Contribution Report. Its conclusion is the sentence to keep: the AES are neither an alternative, an auxiliary nor a supplementary track, but an essential and inseparable part of the strategic development of the System.

IN THE DISCUSSIONS Each request made of the governing bodies is matched by a commitment from the schools: annual quality development plans aligned with ESS indicators, systematic contribution to monitoring and evaluation, and participation in curriculum and Baccalaureate reviews.

HOW TO USE THESE TEXTS IN THE WORKING SESSIONS

Groups are invited to anchor their conclusions in at least one of these documents, by article or by paragraph. A conclusion that refers to an existing text can be traced back to a commitment the System has already adopted.

PARTICIPANTS

Schools of the AES network

Registered participants, listed by school. Roles are shown as given at registration.

Accredited European School Ljubljana

Špela Peklar Director
Matthew Charlesworth Deputy Head

Accredited European School Tyrol

Helmuth Aigner Director
Stephen Dea Deputy Head
Rosmarie Knoflach Deputy Head
Gerlinde Prazeller Deputy Head
Rush Bowers Teacher
Melanie Gassler-Tischlinger Parent
Franz Schimek
Daniela Witsch

Accredited European School Warsaw

Marzena Wieczorek Director
Stewart Cogle Deputy Head
Agnieszka Wronowska Deputy Head
Iga Franczyk Student

CAPEEA — parents' association

Marta Medlinska Parent

Centre for European Schooling, Dunshaughlin

Nollaig Gavin Director
Liselotte Ameye Deputy Head

European School Bergen

Peter Garry Director

European School Copenhagen

Özkan Güleriyüz Director
Gareth Shearman Deputy Head
Signe Sutorius Severinsen Teacher
Carmen Candel Palma Student

European School Luxembourg I

Sandra Ribić Deputy Head

European School of Helsinki

Minna Laatu Director
Maija Burton Deputy Head
Johanna Spencer Deputy Head
Sophie Olivier Teacher

European School The Hague

Wouter Abrahamse Director
Nicoline Mostert Deputy Head
Juliet Palmer Deputy Head
Anthony Berry Teacher
Corina Stanescu Teacher
Bruno Samaniego Parent representative
Bauke Westphal Parent

Europäische Schule RheinMain, Bad Vilbel

Gitta Lotz Director
Marcus Adams Deputy Head
Moritz Månsson Deputy Head
Daniella Schmitt Deputy Head
Teagan Edwards Teacher
Okkert Havenga Teacher
Janina Wiebols Parent

Europäische Schule Saarland, Saarbrücken

Hubert Jung Director
Sabine Schoenig Deputy Head
Christian Habermann Teacher
Eva Hallauer-Lang Teacher
Andrea Kovacs-Dilk Teacher
Rainer Menz Parent

Lycée Edward Steichen, Clervaux

Max Wolff Director
Christiane Schaack Deputy Head
Stephan Schmitz Deputy Head
Tomas Thorpe Teacher
Frances Wiltcher Teacher
Giles Kerridge
Céline Renard

Lënster Lycée International School, Junglinster

Tom Nober Director
Aly Trausch Deputy Head
Tom Retter Teacher
Roselinde Tomp Teacher
Margaret Christie Parent
Stefanie Wien Parent

School of European Education, Heraklion

Areti Vouraki Director
Kanelina Karali Teacher

Scuola per l'Europa, Parma

Carola Zelika Gavazzi Director
Benedetta Toni Deputy Head
Yazmina Herguido Sifre Teacher

PARTICIPANTS

Schools continued

Tallinn European School

Ian Karell Director
 Liina Junolaine Deputy Head
 Luis Arreaga Teacher
 Oscar Visus Parent
 Frida Ballestrin Student

École européenne de Strasbourg

Corinne Chan Yue Tack Director
 Yannick Muller Deputy Head
 Erik Bordat Parent
 Robyn Eyde Parent

École européenne Lille Métropole Jacques Delors

Ilja van Genne Director
 Maxence Carton Deputy Head
 Audrey Duchesne Deputy Head

École européenne Paris-La Défense

Marion Marchal Director
 Lucas Boudet Deputy Head
 Nathalie Nidelet Deputy Head
 Alysha Harding Teacher
 Iunia Gafita Student

École internationale Anne Beffort, Mersch

Oli Maria Victoria Grober Deputy Head
 Estefania Martinez Valdes Teacher
 Xamantha Gavadan Student

École internationale Differdange et Esch-sur-Alzette

Elisabeth Da Silva Deputy Head
 Gilles Krecké Teacher
 Michael Fox

École internationale Mondorf-les-Bains

Simon Cookdale Deputy Head
 Eric Falchero Deputy Head
 Aurélie Duperat Teacher
 Coraline Lippens Teacher

École internationale PACA, Manosque

Nicolas Debenne Director
 Rebeca Morones Deputy Head
 Olivier Saussey Teacher
 Nicolas Gallot Parent

École Européenne Bruxelles-Argenteuil (EEBA) · host school

Rohan Jakkinapalli Student representative
 Rayaan Appels Student representative
 Luca Ciapparelli Student representative
 Teodor Craciun Student representative
 Julian Hattig Student representative
 Linn Hattig Student representative
 Galit Obermajster Student representative
 Julia Orenbach Student representative
 Neal Rodot Student representative

PARTICIPANTS

Institutions and delegations

Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools

Andreas Beckmann
Secretary-General of the European Schools

Manuel Bordoy
Deputy Secretary-General

Károly Pála
Executive Coordinator to the Secretary-General

Ewa Rudomino
Head of the European Baccalaureate Unit

Ciprian Fartusnic
Head of the Pedagogical Development Unit

Valeria Pintus
Head of the AES Cell

Heads of Delegation

Representing their Member States on the Board of Governors of the European Schools.

Monika Van Geit
Belgian Delegation

Thomas Mayer
German Delegation

Romain Nehs
Luxembourgish Delegation

Marvin Spiteri
Maltese Delegation

Educational Initiatives Fair — exhibitors

Karolien Haese [Beyond Stigma](#)
Aurèle de Merode [Beyond Stigma](#)
Estelle de Merode [Beyond Stigma](#)
Héloïse Coppée [EcoReps](#)
Guillaume Martel [EdTech](#)

Yasmin Hollis [NCUK & Uni Foundation](#)
Stan Idelsen [NCUK & Uni Foundation](#)
Alexia Martin [Out of the Books](#)
Sophie Van den Plas [Out of the Books](#)
Estelle Nicolay [Rail Trip Travel](#)

The conference team — EEBA

Charlotte Poma · Soren Hansen · Jean-Michel Grangé · Tsjitske Tubbs · Florence Cambier · Pierre-Paul Fiévé · Henry Stevenson · Félix de Merode · Philippine d'Ursel · Laetitia d'Oreye · Christiane Delporte · Eleonora Frigo · Clara Jutten · Jesús Gimeno · Chance Mwiseneza · Charlotte Vanye · Patrice Denay · Gersende d'Udekem · Tiphaine Bonsigne

AROUND THE TABLE THIS WEEK

Twenty-four schools of the AES network, including the host school, together with the Office of the Secretary-General, national delegations, EU agency representatives, parents' associations and student representatives from across the network.

These lists reproduce the information given on the registration forms and are closed as at the date of printing: no change can be made to this document once printed. Errors and omissions are possible, and we apologise in advance for any.



THANK YOU

“Unfolding Europe's Future Through Education”

École Européenne Bruxelles–Argenteuil

Enjoy Education

Square d'Argenteuil 5, 1410 Waterloo, Belgium

info@eeba.be · +32 2 357 06 70

europeanschool.be

SEE YOU IN LUXEMBOURG · AES CONFERENCE 2027