



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION
Staff Committee
Local Staff Committee Brussels

Brussels, 03rd December 2007
CLP/JLB/MDM/mjg D(2007) 45

NOTE TO THE ATTENTION OF M. KALLAS

Subject: Follow-up of the European schools

The Local Staff Committee of Brussels (LSC) sent you on October 9th 2007 a note concerning their view on certain objective criteria for enrolment in the European schools to which you responded with a positive attitude on November 13th 2007. This was much appreciated by the LSC.

Nonetheless, complementary to that note, the LSC is increasingly worried about the effects of the current enrolment policy. Parents, through the follow-up committee of the LSC and individually, are consulting us on a daily basis to find out in which school they have to enrol in order to ensure a stable long-term placement of their children.

We believe that year by year changing enrolment policy is not sustainable in view of the current situation.

As you mention in your response, the Board of Governors fixed four key objectives: to fill Brussels IV, to ensure a balanced distribution among schools and sections, to reduce overcrowding and to ensure pedagogical continuity in the sections with restricted enrolment in the old Brussels schools.

As mentioned also in your response, some elements of concern were indirectly addressed, but, when looking at the results of the last three years, we believe more needs to be done. The annex II statistics demonstrate this better than many words.

They show how limited was the enrolment in Berkendael and how many pupils potentially disappeared from the European Schools circuit. They also show why parents are so anxious to get the “pedagogical continuity” (in both aspects of continuity through a cycle and in terms of ensuring a viable size to each class with a minimum number of pupils guaranteed).

As suggested in our note of October 9th, we do understand that there are constraints that make designing an effective multi-annual policy very difficult, in particular with the lack of provision of adequate infrastructures by the Belgian authorities. Nevertheless we believe it is possible at least to mitigate the negative effects of the current policy and that this should be done as soon as possible.

For this purpose, we would like to show also support to the proposal addressed to the Board of Governors by the four APEEEs (see Annex I) while keeping, in line with our note of October 9th, our point of view concerning pedagogical continuity and status of Cat III.

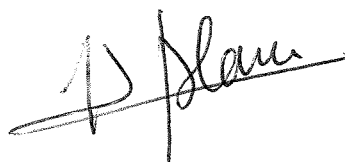
To express it clearer, according to our sources, we believe that one of the reason pupils were not enrolled in Berkendael is that parents were afraid of the “transitional” state of the school, thereby not allowing them to plan the schooling of their children and combine their private and professional life while having to invest to be not too far from it. Moreover, many parents also consider the distance between their home and Berkendael too long for their children, which are only between 4 to 8 years of age (apparently for some, two times a day more than 1 hour on the bus).

And we would like to emphasis that all Cat I pupils, not only Cat I siblings (although they shall be a priority within the Cat I priority), should be allowed in priority to any schools where places are available, as they have the right to, followed by other categories siblings, Cat II, and Cat III pupils only completing these first priority ones. This seems not to be reflected in the current enrolment policy.

Moreover, the Board of Governors has given to the CEA the mandate to monitor the student population and its development. To do this we consider essential that the appropriate technical tools are made available. Therefore, enrolment should be possible on-line via a secured web application. And this should be complemented by the set-up of a central database which should contain all data necessary to monitor and also to forecast population dynamics. To allow professional forecasts, modelling tools should be developed. And in order to help you with such needs, we are in contact with parents that have developed a prototype application for web enrolment that could be used by the CEA and Commission services dealing with schools.

Finally, the LSC would like to express its full support to the position taken by the Commission vis-à-vis our host country regarding Brussels IV. We believe the delays announced by the Belgian authorities for making new infrastructures available are not acceptable. We ask therefore that the Commission envisage without delay a legal procedure against Belgium for non-respect of the obligations deriving from the convention on the basis of M. Reynders note.

Considering the difficult situation described above and the need to establish a better enrolment policy, we would like to ask you to meet the LSC and a delegation of parents at your earliest convenience.



Jean-Louis Blanc

Cc: CLP, MM. C. Chêne, A. Scriban

Bruxelles, le 18/10/2007

NOTE FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**HOW SHALL THE ENROLMENT POLICY CHANGE
PROPOSAL BY THE FOUR BRUSSELS BASED APEEEs**

Dear Sir, dear Madam,

Our APEEEs have carefully analysed the outcome of last year's enrolment policy. We believe it is now time to introduce a certain degree of flexibility to avoid damages that its strict application will generate. The changes we propose will also allow reaching results that comply with the objectives set by the Board of Governors and a better balance in the distribution between schools and sections and a more efficient use of resources. Last but not least they will greatly improve the way the enrolment policy is perceived in particular by parents who do not have their kids in the school system yet. This is particularly important at a time when several hundreds of category I pupils have either refused the place that was allocated or have never even tried to enrol. We must find a way to ensure that the concept of "intelligent flexibility" is put into practice and we believe our proposals go in the right direction.

For this purpose we propose the following improvements for next year enrolment policy:

1. Pedagogical continuity at ES in Brussels

Several nursery and primary classes of the five sections in the old schools targeted by the restrictions in enrolment have now reached a critical level. If the same policy is applied for another year, some of them will shrink to levels leading to their merging with other classes or even their closing. In order to maintain these classes at least 15 pupils per class in the nursery cycle and 1st primary should be allowed to enrol. Objective criteria could be used to allocate the available places. This is for the old schools the key feature we propose to introduce in next year's policy.

For BXL IV, however, a different policy should apply: To increase enrolments at the transitory site of ES BXL IV the school should be made more attractive for instance by ensuring that services provided by the APEEE, canteen, transport and extracurricular activities can be offered at a comparable level of quality and at comparable prices like in the ES BXL I-III. Measures to be taken should include further funds extended on all services if needed and for a prolonged period. The future consolidation of finances of APEEE BXL IV strongly depends on the duration of the transitory period in rue Berkendael.

2. Return from posting abroad:

The possibility to return to the school of origin should be foreseen and criteria established for this purpose, admission during the phase of enrolment (February/March) could be allowed.

3. *SWALS:*

The inspectors have stressed the importance of ensuring that the number of non-native speakers does not exceed 15-20% of the class size. The APEEEs ask that the appropriate mechanisms be set in place to ensure that the maximum ratio indicated by the inspectors is respected.

4. *Equal treatment of siblings of category I and III children:*

Siblings should be allowed to enrol in the same school irrespective of their category.

5. *Cat III:*

Exceptionally non sibling CAT III pupils could be admitted at Berkendael for the next year to ensure an effective start up of this school, however, limited to a strictly necessary extent per language section.

6. *Children of the European Schools' teaching staff:*

The APEEEs are ready to discuss the possibility of having their children enrolled in the school where they work if requested. This might be necessary in particular to avoid recruitment problems that could be caused by the non-admission of the children.

7. *Composition of the CEA:*

The APEEEs should have at least one additional vote to ensure the current balance in the CEA voting system is maintained in view of the increased voting power of the headmasters.

In the other hand, we insist on the fact that the 4 Apeees of Brussels are the legal representatives of the parents. Indeed, the Apeees have a legal and democratic structure based on status, General Assemblies and elected boards mandated by the parents.

8. *Overcrowding:*

Last but not least we call your attention to the fact that overcrowding remains the major problem at the old schools. This situation has a significant negative impact on many services like transport (difficulty in the bus access, high risk of accidents, etc) and school infrastructures (very limited time for lunch, limited access to sport facilities, etc). The present policy has not been able to fully address this issue. Structural solutions must be found immediately.

The announced delay in delivering the new Laeken buildings should be earmarked as unacceptable. The host country should be asked without further delay to honour the commitments taken.

Additional measures should also be taken into consideration: for example the opening of new sections for those sections that exist only in one school and have a global population justifying this choice (e.g. classes doubled in most grades in particular in the nursery and primary cycle). The corresponding new section could be opened in Brussels IV. The creation of new sections shall not entail any forced transfer of pupils.

We also propose that the number of classes per grade for each section in a given school be determined taking into consideration the maximum capacity of that school and the number of sections. This would mean that for the school of Brussels II with 9 linguistic sections the medium term target should be not more than one class per grade in each section.

Yours sincerely

Signed

Signed

Signed

Signed

APEEE BXL I

APEEE BXL II

APEEE

BXL

III

APEEE BXL IV

Alain KRUYSS,

Günther LORENZ,

Tony BERNARD,

Carola

STREUL,

President

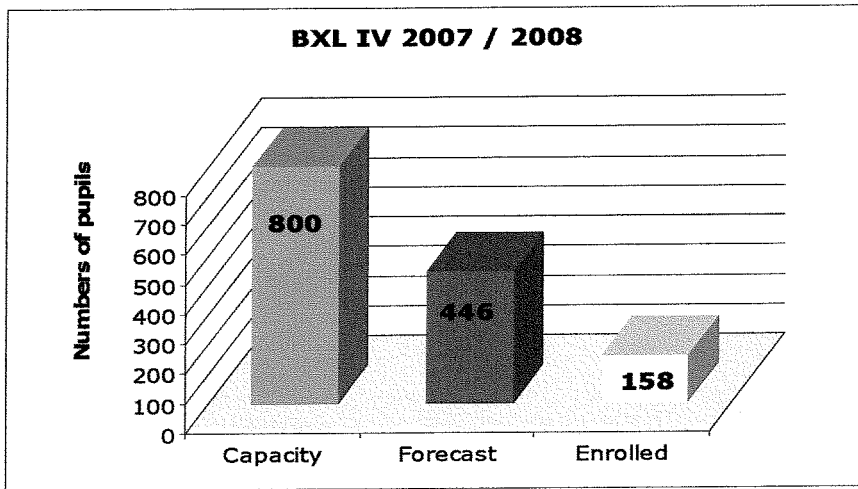
President

President

President

ANNEX II Statistics on enrolment

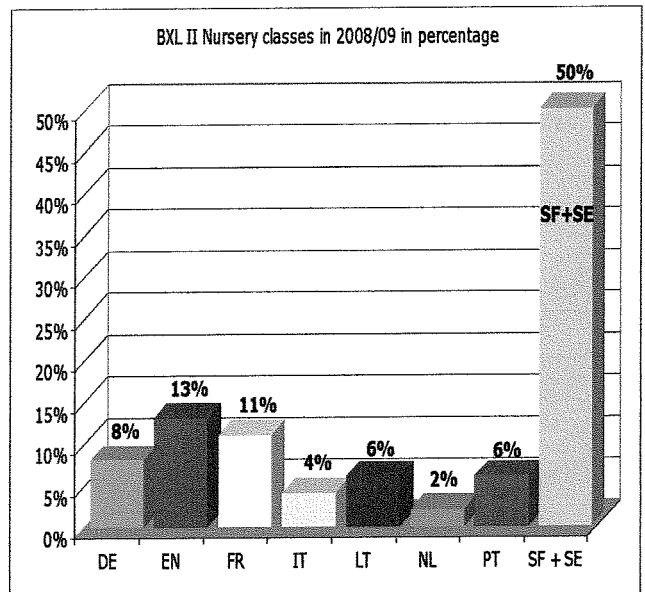
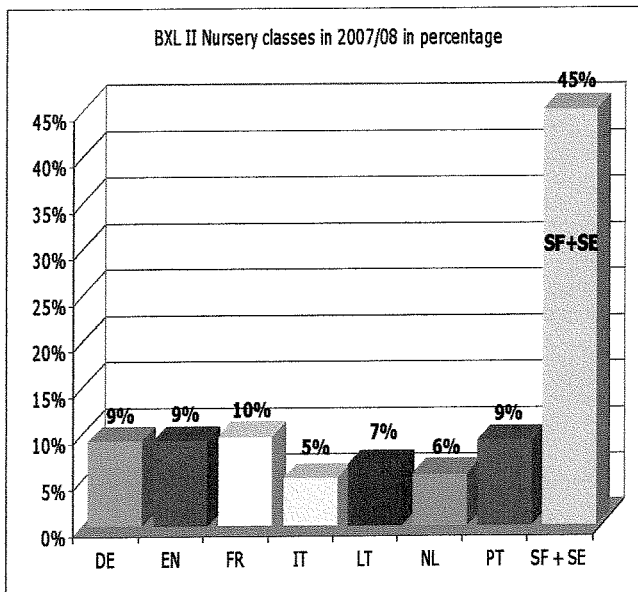
Objective 1: Fill BXL IV



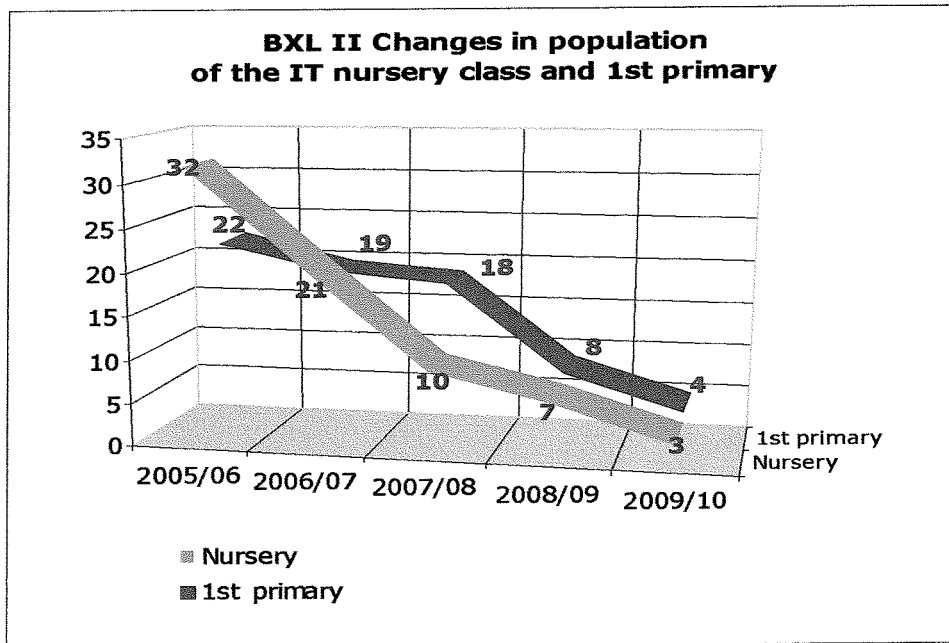
Objective 2 : The balanced distribution among schools/sections

BXL II Nursery classes in 2007/08 in percentage

	DE	EN	FR	IT	LT	NL	PT	SF	SE
2007/08	9%	9%	10%	5%	7%	6%	9%	21%	24%
2008/09	8%	13%	11%	4%	6%	2%	6%	18%	32%

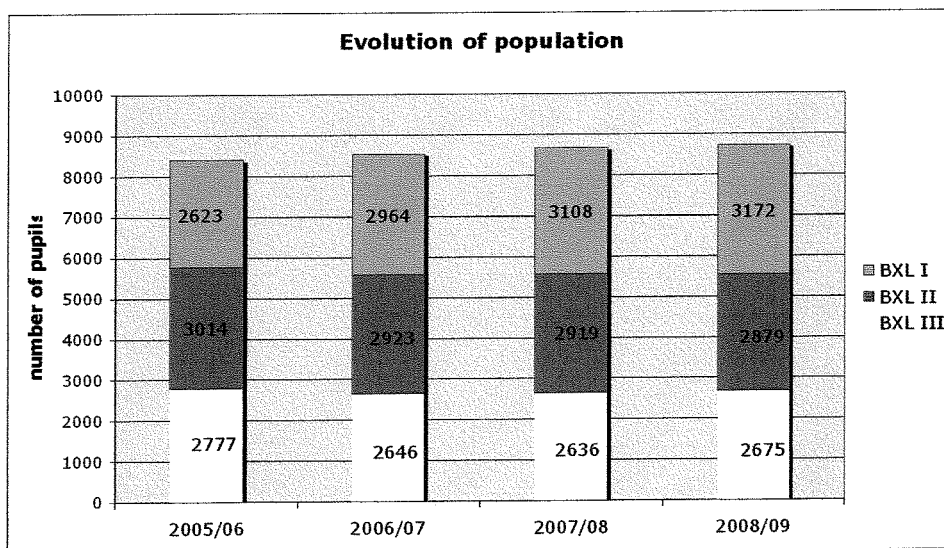


Objective 3 : Pedagogical continuity

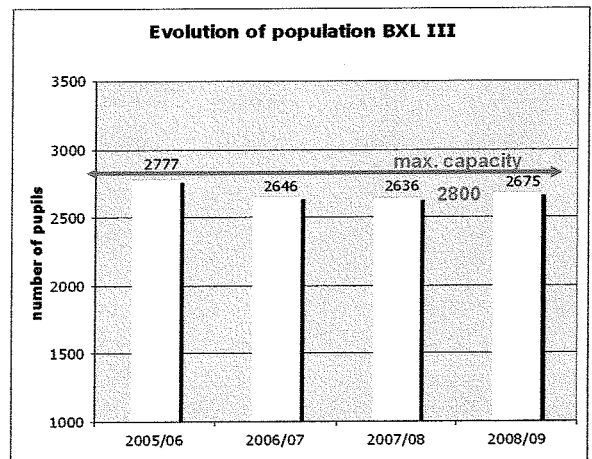
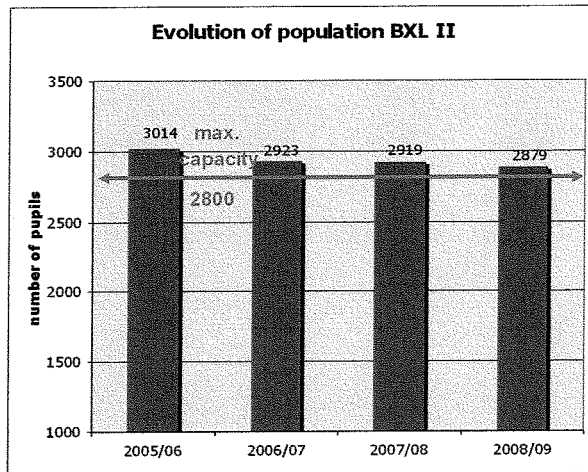
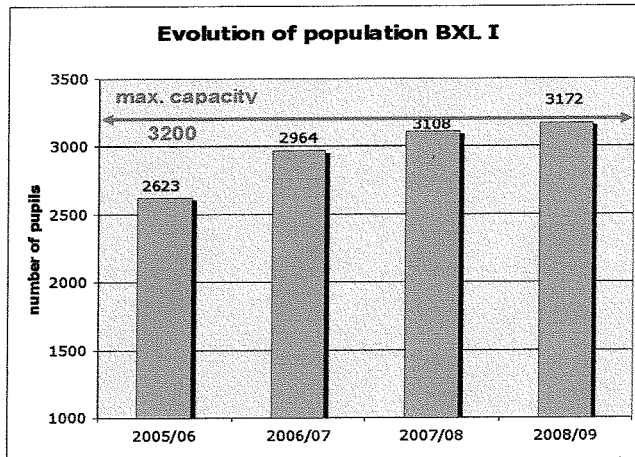


Objective 4 : Relieve overcrowding

	BXL I	BXL II	BXL III	Total
2005 / 06	2.623	3.014	2.777	8.414
2006 / 07	2.964	2.923	2.646	8.533
2007 / 08	3.108	2.919	2.636	8.663
2008 / 09	3.172	2.879	2.675	8.726

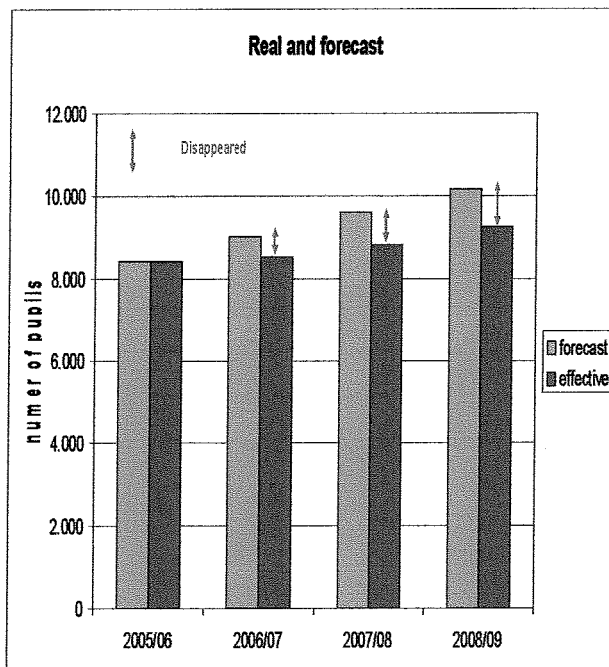


Objective 4 : Relieve overcrowding



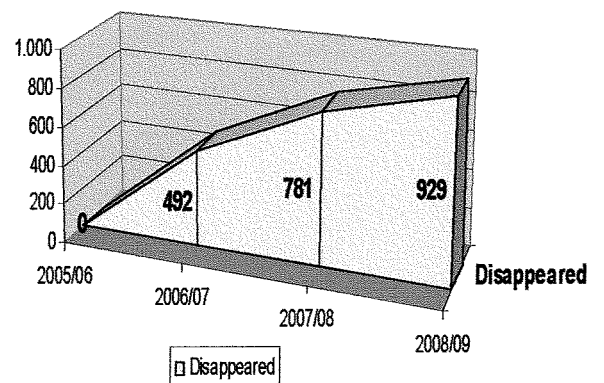
The phantoms: where did all these students go?

	BLI	BLII	BLIII	BLIV	Total	
2005/06	2623	3014	2777		8414	
2006/07	2964	2923	2646		8533	
2007/08	3108	2919	2636	158	8821	
2008/09	3172	2879	2675	525	9251	<i>estimated</i>



Real and forecast

	in 2005	in 2007	Disappeared
2005/06	8.414	8.414	0
2006/07	9.025	8.533	492
2007/08	9.602	8.821	781
2008/09	10.180	9.251	929



N.B. Forecasts are based on the assumption that what happened in the previous year will occur again in the future. This is obviously a simplification, but it's the only forecast possible today in the absence of reliable modelling tools.