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## Mission and Vision of the European Schools

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## **Preamble**

*The Mission and Vision of the European Schools (ES) provides a structured framework that is designed to explain the key elements of the ES system, its purpose, and ambitions for the future.*

*It begins with a summary of the Mission and Vision of the European Schools that includes an outline of the mission, key values, vision, and pillars for development.*

*The summary is elaborated in more details in the document, starting with a historical overview of the ES system and an outline of the core values of the European Schools, which is underpinned by the Treaty of Lisbon (2007) and the fundamental guiding principles laid down in the Convention of the European Schools (1994).*

*The Mission section defines the educational objectives of the system and the key competencies to enable pupils reach their full potential. The system's distinctive features such as multilingualism and multiculturalism and the European Baccalaureate are highlighted as cornerstones of the system's education delivery.*

*The Vision section presents the aspirations of the European Schools system, identifying key areas for development and growth, including the positioning of the ES system as a collaborative partner in the field of education in Europe.*

***This document serves as a reference for future deliverables, including promotional materials, leaflets, and adaptations tailored to individual schools and specific target audiences.***

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## SUMMARY OF THE MISSION AND VISION OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

<b>Mission</b>	<p>The European Schools' system provides high-quality, multilingual, multicultural, and inclusive education for its pupils from nursery until the end of secondary cycle. Rooted in European and democratic values, the system fosters citizenship, intercultural understanding and cooperation, equipping pupils with the competencies necessary to thrive academically, socially and personally in a diverse and a rapidly changing globalised world.</p>			
<b>Values</b>	<b>European identity</b>	<b>Multilingualism and Multiculturalism</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Inclusion</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We integrate the European dimension in our pedagogy.</li> <li>2. We provide high-quality education and uphold European values that include human dignity, freedom, democracy, and equality, rule of law, respect for human rights, as well as inclusiveness, equity and sustainability.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We provide education in all official languages of the EU, from nursery to upper-secondary, culminating in the European Baccalaureate.</li> <li>2. We are committed to upholding and preserving our national languages and cultures.</li> <li>3. We provide a multicultural education through the curriculum.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pupils from different language sections study some subjects in mixed language groups.</li> <li>2. Teachers across EU Member States collaborate in teaching, sharing and exchanging best practice.</li> <li>3. Inspectors from all EU Member States collaborate and provide professional advice on pedagogical developments and collaborate in decision-making processes.</li> <li>4. We promote the active participation of all stakeholders, including pupils, parents, educators and administrative staff in decision-making processes.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We provide learning opportunities to enable all pupils to reach their full potential, regardless of their background, identity or ability.</li> <li>2. We support the wellbeing of pupils and staff in our schools.</li> </ol>

<b>Vision</b>	<p>The European Schools will empower its pupils throughout the provision of high-quality education that nurtures curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, adaptability, and a lifelong passion for learning.</p> <p>By embracing shared European values, innovation, inclusion, and evidence-informed practices, pupils will be equipped with resilience and confidence to navigate in a rapidly evolving world and bridge cultures across Europe and beyond.</p> <p>The European Schools will be a model of excellence, contributing to dialogue and cooperation with educational actors and policymakers. Through a steadfast commitment to quality and continuous enhancement, the European Schools will not only meet future challenges but will shape a brighter and more interconnected future.</p>	
<b>Pillars of development</b>	<b>Educating for tomorrow</b>	<b>Our role and ambition in education in Europe</b>
	<p>We aim to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. empower pupils to be adaptive, innovative, responsible and independent learners by equipping them with the key competencies for lifelong learning;</li> <li>2. enable pupils to develop essential core skills as well as transformative competencies, including soft skills, digital literacy, creativity, critical thinking and sustainability awareness;</li> <li>3. implement pupil-focused, evidence-informed innovative teaching methods;</li> <li>4. develop a flexible and evolving curriculum with interdisciplinary pathways;</li> <li>5. ensure a robust quality assurance model to support continuous improvement.</li> </ol>	<p>We aim to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. actively contribute to the development of European education across the EU;</li> <li>2. foster cooperation with local, national and international educational organisations;</li> <li>3. increase the visibility of the European Schools in EU Member States;</li> <li>4. provide high-quality professional development training and career opportunities to support our educators in the European Schools.</li> </ol>

# INTRODUCTION - THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS' SYSTEM

*Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, it will be borne in upon them as they mature that they belong together. Without ceasing to look to their own lands with love and pride, they will become in mind Europeans, schooled and ready to complete and consolidate the work of their fathers before them, to bring into being a united and thriving Europe.*

*Marcel Decombis<sup>1</sup>*

The European Schools (ES) are **public, intergovernmental educational establishments** jointly managed by the governments of European Union (EU) Member States and EU institutions. The first European School was founded in Luxembourg in 1953.

While the European Schools, originally founded to educate the children of EU staff, continue serving this mission, they have grown into a model of excellence that is now accessible to a broader community of learners across Europe. Since 2005, based on recommendations from the European Parliament, the network has expanded to include Accredited European Schools<sup>2</sup>, national (public or private) schools authorised to offer European Schools' curriculum and the European Baccalaureate Diploma.

The European Schools are unique educational establishments and uphold the core **European values** that include human dignity, freedom, democracy and equality, rule of law, respect for human rights, inclusiveness, equity and sustainability.

The **fundamental principles** are outlined in the *Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools*<sup>3</sup>. The concept of a **European dimension**, rooted in a shared past and future, respect for individual convictions, support for diverse needs, and inclusion of pupils with special educational needs are prioritised. The European dimension is developed in the curriculum and visible in the teaching and learning process to reflect and promote an understanding of European history, culture, values, and integration, while the national identity of Member States is also nurtured.

The European Schools offer education **from nursery through primary to secondary cycle** and reinforce the development of **key competencies** for lifelong learning throughout the entire course of studies, culminating in the **European Baccalaureate** cycle in the final two years of the secondary cycle. The European Baccalaureate Diploma is officially recognised as an entry qualification for higher education in all EU Member States, as well as in other countries.

The basic instruction is delivered in the **official languages of the EU** to nurture each pupil's dominant language (mother tongue, Language 1) and their cultural identity. Consequently, each

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<sup>1</sup> First Director of the first European School in Luxembourg (1953)

<sup>2</sup> Accredited European Schools are not subject to the same legal, administrative, and financial rules that apply to traditional European Schools.

<sup>3</sup> Official Journal L 212, 17/08/1994 P. 0003 - 0014

European School provides a number of **language sections**. The curriculum and syllabus, except for the pupil's dominant language, are identical across all sections.

**Quality Assurance** in the European Schools is conducted at system level by **inspectors** designated by the Member States. This involves conducting systematic reviews of educational provision to maintain and enhance the quality of the European Schools. Quality assurance at school level is a shared responsibility between school management and designated members of the Board of Inspectors.

## MISSION

*The European Schools' system provides high-quality, multilingual, multicultural, and inclusive education for its pupils from nursery until the end of secondary cycle. Rooted in European and democratic values, the system fosters citizenship, intercultural understanding, and cooperation, equipping pupils with the competencies necessary to thrive academically, socially, and personally in a diverse and a rapidly changing globalised world.*

The European Schools aim to create a **dynamic learning environment** where pupils can thrive academically, socially, and personally. European identity, citizenship and mutual understandings are fostered to promote **European integration and cooperation**.

The European Schools' (ES) system is unique in providing instruction in **all official languages of the EU** while promoting pupils' dominant language and creating a **multilingual and multicultural environment**. Pupils are taught at least two and up to four **foreign languages**. The curriculum also places a strong emphasis on **content and language integrated learning (CLIL)** with certain subjects<sup>4</sup> taught in their second language (L2).

The European Schools embody an **inclusive educational philosophy** that fosters an enriched, healthy and diverse learning environment. The ES system aims to create a learning environment where all learners are valued, supported and prepared to contribute meaningfully to society.

## EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

To fulfil the educational mission of the European Schools, learners are offered high-quality comprehensive education to develop pupils' **knowledge, skills, values and attitudes** embedded in the **key competencies for lifelong learning**<sup>5</sup>, as well as the capacity and motivation to engage in further studies. This approach supports the diverse learning needs of all pupils and encourages them to reach their full potential regardless of their background, identity or ability. Pupils are challenged to become **creative, collaborative, and critical thinkers**, as well as responsible European and global citizens.

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<sup>4</sup> European Hours in the primary cycle and Human Science, Geography, History, Economics, Religion/Ethics in the secondary cycle.

<sup>5</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Key competences for lifelong learning*, Publications Office, 2019, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/569540>

The European Schools foster responsibility, communication, cooperation, tolerance and concern for others, with a special focus on the mental health and psychological wellbeing of pupils and all members of the school community.

## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

The key features of the European Schools that highlight their uniqueness include:

- A multilingual and multicultural system of contemporary education integrating pedagogical best practices from EU Member States and nurturing linguistic and cultural diversity.
- A comprehensive, European value-driven and inclusive education encompassing nursery, primary and secondary cycles.
- A well-designed structure for teaching languages where
  - o pupils are instructed through and learn in their dominant language (L1)
  - o pupils study their second language (L2) from the beginning of the primary cycle
  - o pupils study a compulsory third language (L3) from the beginning of the secondary cycle and two optional foreign languages (L4/L5) during the secondary cycle
- The Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)<sup>6</sup> methodology is introduced in the last years of the primary cycle and is developed systematically in the secondary cycle.
- A Junior Laureate Certificate is provided to all pupils at the end of year 5 of the secondary cycle.
- The European Baccalaureate, awarded since 1959, is a prestigious and rigorous diploma recognised by all EU Member States and other countries.

## THE EUROPEAN BACCALAUREATE

Pupils who complete at least the two final years of secondary education in a European School have the opportunity to be awarded the European Baccalaureate Diploma. This Diploma is **officially recognised** as an entry qualification for higher and further education **in EU Member States**, as well as in other countries<sup>7</sup>.

The European Baccalaureate Diploma certifies that graduates can communicate fluently in at least two languages (Language 1 and Language 2) and have studied a **wide range of subjects**, assessed through both written and oral examinations.

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<sup>6</sup> Content and Language Integrated (CLIL) Learning is a language-learning approach that uses the target language as the medium of instruction through which both the content and the language are taught through the target language.

<sup>7</sup> See Article 5 of the Convention defining the statute of the European Schools.



The quality assurance of the European Baccalaureate is overseen by an **independent Chairperson** of the European Baccalaureate, supported by the **Inspectors delegated** to the European Schools by each Member State.

## GOVERNANCE

Achieving educational goals at both the school and system levels requires a fair distribution of responsibilities between European institutions and EU Member States, a transparent decision-making process that includes all stakeholders (such as pupils, parents, teachers, and administrative staff), strong accountability among decision-makers at all levels, and high recognition of all staff members, regardless of their employment status.

## VISION

*The European Schools' system will empower its pupils throughout the provision of high-quality education that nurtures curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, adaptability, and a lifelong passion for learning.*

*By embracing shared European values, innovation, inclusion, and evidence-informed practices, pupils will be equipped with resilience and confidence to navigate in a rapidly evolving world and bridge cultures across Europe and beyond.*

*The European Schools will be a model of excellence, contributing to dialogue and cooperation with educational actors and policymakers. Through a steadfast commitment to quality and continuous enhancement, the European Schools will not only meet future challenges but will shape a brighter and more interconnected future.*

## EDUCATING FOR TOMORROW

Recognising the need to empower our pupils as active agents in a world facing demanding environmental, social and economic challenges, the European Schools are committed to equipping pupils with the competencies and skills needed to manage these challenges effectively. Our commitment to democratic practices will continue to guide us into the future assuring the continuity of the tradition and values of the European Schools. One of those key principles is safeguarding each pupil's dominant language education to foster their cultural identity. To achieve this, the European Schools will seek opportunities to establish new language sections while also exploring inclusive and sustainable approaches to support and enhance the viability of smaller language sections.

To ensure that the European Schools remain at the forefront of education, the organisation of studies and teaching approaches will be based on the most up-to-date pedagogical developments. These developments, when translated into efficient and effective teaching and

learning practices will enable pupils to meet the unpredictable social, economic and environmental challenges of the future.

### **Pupil profile: Developing adaptive and innovative learners**

The European Schools' system recognises that the knowledge and skillset needed by our graduates is constantly evolving. From nursery cycle to the end of secondary education, pupils need to become increasingly resilient, innovative, responsible and independent learners. They will need to acquire relevant knowledge and develop a range of skills that they will require to address the future challenges of society and solve new and complex problems in various contexts. Pupils will take an active role in their own learning and become co-agents of their own development, alongside their teachers and peers.

In addition to academic subjects, and the key competencies for lifelong learning, pupils will need to develop flexible and soft skills as well as transformative competencies<sup>8</sup>, which will empower them to shape their future. They will need to think critically, communicate, and collaborate effectively, and develop their curiosity and creativity through experiential and inquiry-based approaches to learning.

Thus, graduates need to be self-aware lifelong learners with strong multicultural backgrounds and multilingual skills. They will need to be literate across various areas including communication and humanities, mathematics, science, digital technologies, and social skills. They will need to be empathetic human beings with a commitment to active citizenship and sustainable development, while upholding European values.

### **Management, educators, and non-teaching staff**

All staff members will work together to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of the schools, contributing to a supportive and respectful learning environment.

Teachers will guide pupils in their role as facilitators of learning through the implementation of collaborative teaching practices and active pupil involvement. The promotion of shared responsibility, respect and inclusivity will be standard practice in classrooms. All teachers will engage in professional communities, where they will develop and share effective and innovative pedagogical ideas and practices.

The European Schools will attract highly competent and motivated educators and non-teaching staff and will support their wellbeing and career development through tailored continuous professional development programmes.

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<sup>8</sup> OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030/2040  
[OECD Learning Compass 2030 Concept Note Series.pdf](#)

## **Curriculum and pedagogy**

A flexible and evolving curriculum will equip pupils with the academic and practical skills required for their future. Social-emotional learning and wellbeing will be integrated into both teaching practices and the daily culture of the school.

The European identity will continue to guide curriculum development and delivery, while also fostering national identity, heritage and culture. Teachers in the European Schools will continue to use a cross-curricular approach, including the European dimension in teaching and learning and to embed European values in every learning context.

The European Schools will aim to empower pupils as agents of change in an increasingly unstable world and help build a more sustainable Europe committed to democratic values. A whole-school approach will be promoted that incorporates all areas of activity and makes sustainability part of the lived and taught experience of school life. Sustainability will be integrated into the curriculum, promoting pupils' active engagement in the wider school community.

Central to our pedagogical approaches are the teaching, learning and assessment frameworks which will continue to be developed, encouraging inquiry-based learning connected to real-world contexts. This, combined with blended learning, will empower pupils to encourage their active participation and develop their independent skills. Technology will be extensively employed in the ES, including the use of e-assessment tools, high-performing learning management systems, and open educational resources for both pupils and teachers. These digital tools will support pupils' personalised educational experiences. The pedagogical approaches used in the European Schools will harness the benefits of new technologies while addressing their risks, ensuring that human values, skills, and the human dimension remain at the heart of pupils' education.

## **Inclusion, diversity and wellbeing**

The European Schools envision a vibrant, inclusive educational community where diversity is a cornerstone of learning and growth. Rooted in the principles of empathy, respect, and fairness, the ES system aims to be a provider of equitable education, empowering every pupil to reach their full potential so that they can succeed academically, socially, and emotionally, regardless of background, ability or identity.

The European Schools will ensure that every pupil feels recognised, valued and supported by embedding practices that eliminate barriers and prejudice. Flexible and adaptive policies will reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of our school communities, promoting universal access to high-quality education. Pupils in the European Schools will learn in a safeguarded and protected environment that promotes wellbeing, respect and inclusion. They will be supported to grow as confident, responsible, and active citizens, with learning experiences that value their voice, protect their rights, and foster their full potential.

Recognising the intrinsic link between holistic wellbeing and pupils' learning, the social and emotional development of pupils will remain a key priority. By embracing advanced educational approaches and inclusive practices, the European Schools aim to support diverse learning needs through flexible and responsive pathways. Building on practices already implemented in some European Schools, the ES system will explore additional ways to broaden access to alternative or complementary school leaving certificates, ensuring they align with the shared standards and values of the European Schools.

## **Quality Assurance**

A robust quality assurance model, that includes evidence-informed internal school self-evaluation combined with external evaluations, is essential for ensuring high-quality teaching and learning to preserve the reputation of the ES system's educational offering.

The key role of inspectors delegated to the European Schools is to ensure the quality of the education provided by the schools and to this end to ensure that the necessary inspections are carried out. Additional capacity building to support the work of the European Schools may be provided through the secondments of national educational experts. Regular independent external evaluations will be conducted across all schools. These system-wide evaluations will help monitor quality and generate a rich body of data, supporting evidence-based decision-making to continuously improve teaching and learning in the European Schools.

The ES system will strengthen its ability to collect and analyse data, ensuring well-informed, evidence-based decisions that enhance the educational learner experience for pupils, support teachers, and improve overall school performance.

## **THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS IN EDUCATION IN EUROPE**

The ES system is regarded as a high-quality educational model in the European Union (EU), due to its multilingual curriculum, alignment with European values, and strong academic outcomes. It offers a unique blend of national and European educational elements, ensuring both excellence and inclusivity. Moreover, the European Baccalaureate is widely recognised for its academic depth and breadth, facilitating access to higher education across Europe and beyond.

The European Schools provide pupils with access to a multilingual, comprehensive, competence-based, value-driven curriculum that continues to evolve and can be adapted to national education systems. The European Schools have produced some teaching and learning materials that will be shared or further developed through cooperation with national education systems.

The ES system aspires to become a centre for dynamic dialogue with other educators and policymakers. Through the exchange of innovative, evidence-informed and value-driven practices, the ES system aims to adapt to the evolving needs of society, remain resilient when faced with challenges while continuously strengthening its internal capacity through its quality assurance mechanisms.

The ES system aims to increase its visibility and influence in the field of education within the EU. Participation in educational debates with various Member States and key stakeholders in education policymaking will be strengthened.

The ES system seeks to promote this unique educational model throughout the EU and to expand its presence across all EU Member States, with the possibility of establishing Accredited European Schools in additional EU Member States<sup>9</sup>. This expansion depends on the interest and priorities of each Member State.

Furthermore, the ES system will explore the possibility of new forms of cooperation and partnerships with national and international organisations. Cooperation between European Schools and other national educational institutions will be strengthened. To this end, the European Schools could draw on the national networks of schools abroad established by various EU Member States.

The use of online courses, virtual classrooms and blended e-learning models will be explored to make European schooling more accessible and widespread, especially for pupils in remote areas or vulnerable communities, ensuring they can benefit from the opportunity to access high-quality European education. This will also help pupils build connections with their peers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, reinforcing their European identity.

The European Schools can also play a key role in promoting international cooperation beyond the borders of the EU. Bringing European schooling closer to neighbouring and strategic partner countries could create opportunities for pupils and educators from outside Europe to engage with the European Schools' model of education. In this sense, the European Schools could contribute to foster mutual understanding and to educate future leaders who would share and uphold the European ideals.

## **Continuous Professional Development**

The European Schools are developing continuous professional development pathways where best practices and innovative educational experiences can be shared and exchanged with other schools across Europe.

The European Schools aim to enhance external collaboration through participation in European mobility and cooperation programmes. Furthermore, engaging in dialogue with academia will validate teaching practice through research.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Parma Declaration to "Action Plan: Reflection on the Future of the European Schools System" (ref.: 2024-03-D-19-en-2), approved by the Board of Governors in April 2024.