



European Meeting of Independent Education EMIE¹

February 2022

Position Paper on Pathways to School Success

A school system that is the most adequate to achieve education as a common good is a school system under the supervision and coordination of the State but composed both of schools managed by public authorities and schools managed by organizations/people from the civil society.

Education is the highest priority in the life of a country and its people. In order to successfully achieve it, all initiative in this field must be welcome. Neither the State nor civil society are able to succeed alone. Pluralistic school systems, based on the principle of subsidiarity are the way forward. All schools must be accessible to students who want to enroll, in a context of freedom of choice.

5 pillars to enable school success in a pluralistic Europe

- **Education as a common good:**

Education excellence cannot be realized only through an exclusive relation between the public administrations and the children, without considering the crucial role of all other stakeholders including teachers, parents, communities, non-governmental schools, unions and civil society organisations. In this regard, it is vital to bring together governmental and non-governmental actors in the field of education. As UNESCO pointed out, we all benefit from the different initiatives launched in the field of education. Therefore, we should not only be focused in applying a state-run good approach, but rather, as established in the 2030 Agenda, adopt a common good approach.

- **Independent Schools are an essential part of the educational ecosystem:**

According to Eurostat, in 2016, Europe had 107.961.287 students from pre-school to upper secondary. Of these, roughly 20 million attend an independent school (18.7%). Being a significant and relevant part of the educational system these schools ought to be heard. Due to the historical differences in the way school systems evolved in Europe, there are great differences between countries in the percentage of students that attend independent or state schools. However, all countries recognize the right to establish independent schools and in most countries, national school systems depend on the existence of independent schools.

In 2018 the European Parliament adopted its resolution on modernisation of education in the EU, *“encourag[ing] with regard to increasing inclusiveness and ensuring freedom of*

¹ EMIE - the European Meeting of Independent Education is an informal platform of National and European organizations that support independent education. EMIE promotes regular meetings for debate of education issues in Europe. For more info: secretariat@ecnais.org / info@ecsw.eu / oidel@oidel.org



educational choice, the provision of adequate financial support for schools of all categories and levels, both state schools and not-for-profit private schools". But according to OECD², circa 50% of independent schools do not receive any financial support from the state, while in countries that support attendance of independent schools, the range of public contribution goes from countries that have small funding and only for some independent schools (e.g., Poland, Hungary, Italy), to countries that have significant funding but for only some independent schools (e.g., Czechia, Portugal), to countries that have significant funding for quite a lot of independent schools (e.g., Spain), to countries that have very significant funding for most or all independent schools (e.g., The Netherlands, Denmark, Finland).

It is important that countries find the best way to support diversity in their educational ecosystem, be it through direct financial support to the families, through the schools or in other fair ways.

- **Parents as a cornerstone of the realization of the children's rights**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes their inalienable rights and that *"Parents (...) have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child"*. Moreover, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union acknowledges that *"the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions shall be respected"*.

Thus, in order to successfully reach educational excellence, we need to regard parents as a crucial part of the equation, including their right to educational choice, that will lead to ensuring the full realization of children's rights.

Parents have responded positively when public authorities were overtaken by the COVID shut down. Now, it is crucial to keep respecting parents, regardless of their convictions or income, as a trustful cornerstone for the realization of the right to education.

- **Diversity and quality education as fundamentals of democracy**

Manifold challenges of today cannot be solved with one-size-fits all approaches and require more diversity - pedagogical, organizational, cultural. Political culture and legal frameworks can either facilitate or hinder this endeavor. The independent school sector serves as the enabler of such diversity and thus must be protected and nourished by the democratic states.

- **Well-being and school climate**

The implementation of school policies that promote individual well-being at school must be supported by building a healthy school climate as a basis for social learning and integrated school communities of teachers, pupils, parents and local community.

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² OECD (2017). School choice and school vouchers: An OECD perspective



This position paper was approved and is endorsed by:

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|---|---|
|  | AEEP - Associação de Estabelecimentos de Ensino Particular e Cooperativo |
|  | Apprentissages Sans Frontières (ASF) |
|  | Articolo 26 – Famiglia e Scuola Insieme per educare |
|  | BAPS – Bulgarian Association of Private Schools |
|  | CdO - Opere educative |
|  | CECE - Confederación Española de Centros de Enseñanza |
|  | COFAPA - Confederación de padres de alumnos |
|  | ECNAIS – European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools |
|  | ECSWE - European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education |
|  | Edmund Rice International |
|  | Escuelas Católicas |
|  | EFSE - European Foundation Society and Education |
|  | FAFCE – Federation des Associations Familiales Catholiques en Europe |
|  | FAPAE – Federación de Asociaciones de Padres de Alumnos de Euskadi |
|  | FAPEL - Federació d'Associacions de Pares i Mares d'alumnes d'escoles lliures |
|  | FIDAE – Federazione istituti di attività educative |



Fomento – Spanish Fomento Schools



GPEN Reformation



Hungarian Association of Private and Independent Schools



International Association for Christian Education



International Institute of Industrial Ecology and Green Economy



Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice delle Salesiane di Don Bosco (IIMA)



Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen



Kristina Friskolerådet



MIAMSI - International Movement of Apostolate of Independent Social Milieus



New Humanity International Association



NKSR – Nederlandse Katholieke Schoolraad



OIDEL - Organisation Internationale pour le Droit à l'Education et la Liberté d'Enseignement



OIEC – International Office for Catholic Education



Organización Mundial de Antiguos Alumnos de la Educación Católica



Society for International Development - Netherlands Chapter (SID NL)



TÖZOK - Türkiye Özel Okullar Derneği



VBS – Association of Independent Schools (The Netherlands)



Vereniging voor katholiek
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International Volunteerism on Women, Education and Development (VIDES
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WORLD UNION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS
UNION MONDIALE DES ENSEIGNANTS CATHOLIQUES
UNIONE MONDIALE DE INSEGNANTES CATHOLICHE
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World Union of Catholic Teachers