

60th anniversary of the European Schools

Ana Gorey, President, Interparents

Dear Monseigneur, Mme la Ministre, Vice President, Secretary General, Mme la Directrice.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Ana Gorey and I am President of Interparents. With a crowd such as yourselves, I don't need to tell you that Interparents coordinates and represents the parent association's from all the European schools or talk to you about the importance we attach to European Education, the European spirit and sense of European identity that our schools give their pupils

The importance parents and teachers attached to it 60 years ago, when they started this whole European schooling idea back in 1953 is as true today as ever. Parents are those most closely associated with the life of the schools – both their successes and their challenges. Our members, through daily experience over long years, know these schools well and contribute to them. When we propose alternatives, and sometimes criticise, it is on the basis of this large experience, bearing in mind that most of the parents are themselves highly educated, European minded and have a thorough experience of the European Institutions.

So, like my predecessors before me, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the many parents of the European Schools who – over the years – have devoted time, energy and ability throughout their schools. From those who help in the Primary school libraries, to those who serve on the management committees of the school bus services, canteen and extra-curricular activities, to the elected members of their governing bodies, to those picking up their children from school and helping them with their homework, to those who years after their kids have finished school, are still here today helping us.

I would also like to pay tribute to all the teachers and staff at the schools, whose efforts impact directly on our children's successes. And successful it is for many of them, getting into universities and good jobs all over Europe. The European Baccalaureate tests experience and knowledge acquired over a decade of education, testing the whole child through continual assessment and oral examinations as well as written ones.

Our children have no idea what a privilege it is for them to benefit from this brand of multi-cultural, multi-lingual education. Well, maybe later, as the past pupils here are witness to. It is wonderful to see Christianne Bérain- Gros, Baccalauréat 1962, whose father, by the way, was one of the first European school teachers, "porteurs de convictions européennes".

Today we celebrate not only the 60th anniversary of this school but of the whole European School system. We celebrate the idea of European schooling epitomised by the ten principles, which came out of the ruins of war and showed a determination to build Europe through education and our youth.

Interparents believe that it is time for the original political impetus to be renewed. The European Schools and the European Baccalaureate are a platform for the European Union to coordinate a major expansion in European education. They are part of public education in Europe and should address to the European population as a whole. The time is right. Now is the time to act boldly and constructively so lets do it together.