

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-003057/26
to the Commission
Sven Simon (PPE)
(20 July 2026)**

Subject: Fee differences between classical and accredited European Schools

The classical European Schools are anchored in the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools, signed on 21 June 1994. They are funded by the EU budget and contributions in kind from the Member States, and benefit from publicly provided infrastructure. Accredited European Schools, by contrast, operate outside this financial framework and are obliged to shoulder a far greater share of their infrastructure and operating costs themselves.

The ensuing differences in fees may prompt fee-paying families to opt for the classical European Schools, throwing open questions about possible cross-subsidisation and structural competitive disadvantages for Accredited European Schools.

1. What is the reason for the considerable difference between the site-specific Category II contributions and the considerably lower Category III fees, and what funds are used to cover this difference?
2. On what basis are the fees for Category III pupils set, and how does the Commission make sure that public funds are not used to cross-subsidise these school places?
3. Does the Commission take the view that the fee-paying schooling of Category III pupils at classical European Schools constitutes an economic activity within the meaning of EU competition and state aid law?

Submitted: 20.7.2026

**Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission
(14 September 2026)**

European Schools operate under an intergovernmental framework established by the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools ⁽¹⁾, with 32 delegations each holding one vote in the Board of Governors, including one vote for the European Commission. Member States provide premises and teachers, the Commission pays the difference between the remaining costs.

Category II pupils are admitted to the traditional European Schools based on a contract signed by a company or organisation, which pays expenses equivalent to the real costs of the pupil's education.

Fees for Category III pupils in the traditional European Schools are set by the Board of Governors. They reflect both cost considerations and broader access objectives, mostly for the nationals of the Member State providing the premises of the school in its territory.

Category III admission is restricted to places left after admittance of Category I and II, ensuring that Category III pupils incur only marginal costs and that available classroom capacity is fully utilised.

Accredited European schools are national schools with accreditation to teach the European Schools curriculum. They can be either public or private, free or fee-paying, and they have their own set of rules regarding financing.

Traditional European Schools are public educational establishments under the Convention, and the Commission does not consider education of Category III children an economic activity under EU competition or state aid rules.

The system prioritises its public mission primarily serving EU staff families and promoting multilingual education, with Category III pupils' admittance aimed at preventing classroom vacancies, resource optimisation and ensuring access to the system for broader groups.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/convention/1994/558/oj/eng>.