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European School of Strasbourg

Written question No. 574 to the Committee of Ministers

by Lord Tim BOSWELL, United Kingdom, European Democrat Group

The long-standing wish to have a European School in Strasbourg finally became reality on 4th September 2008 with the official inauguration ceremony in the presence of many to whom the Strasbourg school owes its existence: Roland Ries, Mayor of Strasbourg, Guy-Dominique Kennel, President of the Département du Bas-Rhin, Adrien Zeller, President of the Alsace Region, Xavier Darcos, Minister for Education of France, Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe as well as the Inspection académique, permanent representatives, Etoile Education, teaching staff and parents.

Like their European Union counterparts, the European School system's multicultural, multilingual environment and European curricula correspond to the needs of the Permanent Representation's and Council of Europe staff's children. They attach great importance to the values expressed in the European School's objectives and that it works towards one common diploma, the prestigious "European Baccalaureate", based on a 'common curriculum', with as far as possible Mother Tongue Education.

However, the teaching of Mother Tongue Education is reserved for those who are "ayant droit" or Category I within the European School system. Twenty seven member states of the Council of Europe are members of the European Union, are already signatories of the European School Convention and as such pay into the European school system, yet their civil servants do not have equal treatment.

Consequently, Mr Boswell,

To ask the Committee of Ministers, whose Chairmanship currently also holds the Presidency of the Board of Governors of the European Schools,

Why the children of members of the Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe and the children of Council of Europe staff have not, so far, been considered as Category I children?

Why the ideals and values common to all intergovernmental European organisations and institutions, are not reflected by equal treatment of those involved in the construction of our common European ideal: a democratic continent committed to human rights, governed by the rule of law and respectful of multicultural diversity?

Whether the relevant members of the Committee of Ministers could bring this anomaly, as quickly as possible, to the attention of their respective Ministers of Education and Foreign Affairs and of the European Union – Council, Commission and Parliament - particularly in view of the intensified co-operation of our two organisations over the past years including the Memorandum of Understanding and the soon to be accession of the European Union/European Community to the European Convention on Human Rights.

