



ECNAIS

European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools

Open letter to the Greek Government, the Greek Parliament, the Greek Political Parties and the Greek Mass Media and the Press.

The Hague, 29 March 2016

This is an open letter from the European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools (ECNAIS) addressed to all the above recipients.

ECNAIS (www.ecnais.org) is a NGO, which enjoys consultative status with the European Commission and the European Council. ECNAIS is a non-political, non-religious, international union of national associations of independent schools all over Europe, which supports pluralism and decentralization in the national education systems as a means of empowering society, and the parental right of choice of school as this is described in article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Right of the Citizens of the EU.

This open letter is intended to express our grave concerns over the proposed legislation by the Greek Ministry of Education, known as article 40, which if implemented will seriously curtail pluralism and educational freedom within the Greek Education System, will increase centralization, will practically negate the effectiveness of Greek Private Schools and lastly will seriously reduce the educational choices offered to parents.

As we understand the proposed Article 40 stipulates the following:

Items 1 & 2. Prohibit private schools from being providers of informal education and extra-curricular programs. Reinforcement classes for students and foreign language classes outside the compulsory standard Ministry of Education curriculum are prohibited. Evidently this violates the professional and educational freedom of private schools, it reduces the range of choices offered to students and parents and what's more if implemented will lead hundreds of people (educators and others) working in private schools to unemployment.

Item 8. Serious administrative and bureaucratic obstacles are introduced, deterring private schools from implementing additional educational, cultural, athletic and other activities beyond those included in the compulsory standard curriculum of the Ministry. By this provision private schools are placed in a handicapped position compared to public schools, which do not face these same obstacles. Once again the professional and educational freedom of private schools is violated, while the range of choices offered to students and parents is reduced and teachers and other employees who are employed to provide these actions will lose their jobs, if this provision is implemented.

Item 10. Permanency employment terms for private school teachers are retroactively introduced in private schools. Administrative interference is introduced affecting the right of contract content and duration and legislative and procedural restrictions are introduced affecting the right of termination of an employment contract. This provision negates the right of private schools to evaluate their teachers and to choose to employ the best available teachers for their students. This is indeed the most serious blow to the operational and educational freedom of private schools, in the sense that without it they

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will cease being private schools. Evidently, ECNAIS fervently opposes the above mentioned legislative initiatives, which run opposite to its very own core of values.

It calls upon all those within the Government, the Legislature, the Political Parties, the Mass Media and the Press in Greece, who believe in a pluralistic education system, who support the fundamental right of the parental choice in education and who value educational freedom as a pillar of the civic society, to also raise their voices in opposition to this legislation.

Lastly it declares its unequivocal allegiance with Greek Private Schools in their efforts to prevent this legislative initiative from becoming Law.

Yours sincerely,

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