



EPA President's Message for the Dutch General Assembly of
November 12th, 2005.

Dear EPA member,

Twenty years after its foundation, our European Parents Association has already started a new phase. During the last year and half we have established a new way of doing things. We set up the structural and organizational changes needed to run the EPA of the future.

This note, written just before the Dutch General Assembly, is to share with you what we have **done** and what we want to do in the **future** to have a strong European Parents Association.

Regarding the first point on what we have **done**, the most important thing was to change our mind on how to keep the financial balance of EPA. Before the change, we were looking to have projects of parents' activities, to obtain EU Commission subventions to cover the running expenses (office and secretariat) of EPA. As the Commission is only providing 50% of the actual cost of the project, we were not able to compensate all the EPA expenses and one year after the other we were increasing the debt of the association.

Finally, in 2004, we decided to cut the fixed costs (office and administration) to an affordable level. First, we transferred the EPA office to Medin-Europe (consulting firm) also located in Brussels and six months later to the current secretariat location at Ouders&Coo offices in Holland. As a consequence of that, we (EPA) are not able to carry out additional EC subvention parents' projects. We are just finishing the Language Club 2 with its final conference to be held on Nov. 12th, also in Holland, after our next General Assembly. However, this reduction in EPA project promotion is well in line with our new strategy to have EPA focus in sharing the activities of the members and facilitating the networking between them.

Now we have the situation under control and we are at the starting point of a new situation that will assure the future of EPA. We have a healthy financial balance for 2005, with less expense than income. The only expense is the cost of the office in Holland which amounts to 16.000 €/year, plus a contingency fund of 3.000 - 4.000 €. The income will be more than 35.000 €/year coming from member fees. Up to now, more than 35 associations have paid the 2005 fee and we have 3 associations willing to be members of EPA (Lithuania, Estonia and Hungary).

We have been able to pay the historical European Commission debt from the EDP&S of 2002.

Fortis bank accepted to cancel the 50% of debt last July. However, some of the other suppliers didn't accept the deal of payment of 50% now and cancellation for the rest, which was the objective defined in Barcelona in April

2005. They have preferred to wait a little more but to receive the total amount. We were very lucky to find three Spanish associations and one from Italy accepting to provide some funds to pay Fortis bank. This was done in July for the amount of 31.000 €. The re-payment to the Spanish-Italian association will be done over 5 years, which is now affordable for EPA.

The original idea of Friend of EPA, with a minimum of 9 associations and the clause of all suppliers accepting the deal of 50% cash and cancellation of the rest, has been not possible, but the good thing is the agreement reached with Fortis bank and the corresponding help from some associations from Spain and Italy.

Regarding the pending outside suppliers, we have reached agreements to pay them in one or two years. This will be possible with the expected EPA year benefit of 15.000-20.000 € (aprox.) plus the subventions from the EU Commission that we will receive. We have introduced the first week of October the application for the Core Funding of 2006. They will pay at least 50% of our core activities expenses, like this GA meeting in Holland and the EPA office cost as well.

These are the big numbers of the situation. Leopold de Callatay, the EPA treasurer, will share with you the full numbers of EPA.

In short, before 2004, the association was sick, as previously explained. Now we have applied the right "medicine" (fixed cost and fixed income balanced), we have eliminated distracting project activities with no benefits, and we have reached an agreement with the suppliers on how to return the debt. Now, the health of EPA is recovering, but we are still in the "hospital". We still need more "vitamins" to reach the full level of health we want. Part of these "vitamins" have already been applied to EPA in July 2005, through some credit grants from some of the member's association, and the rest of the economical help is expected from the European Commission, who promised to continue their support to EPA in 2006, through our "Core funding" program.

The second important change done so far is the update of our Constitution, to reflect the current situation, the additional networking objectives and mainly to help the governance of EPA. The Barcelona extraordinary General Assembly, held in April 2005, has approved the new Constitution. The main changes are: a) the new EPA GA voting system of one association-one vote, and b) a new Board of seven members from different countries, to replace the previous combination of Administration Council plus Executive Committee.

In the **future** we want to continue being the voice of Parents in Europe; we want to represent parents at European and international level in the development of educational policies and decisions. We also want the recognition of parents as primary educators of their children and to work in partnership with the other educational stakeholders.

We will foster information shared between the members through the by-weekly EPA-Newsletter. We kindly ask you to provide to the EPA secretariat the relevant information of your activities and/or projects that could be of interest to other associations in other countries.

The main activity will be to organize two general EPA meetings and Conferences per year, preferably in the country of EU presidency. As I'm sure you will remember very well, in Barcelona in April 05, we had a conference on the results of the PISA report, among the different European countries.

Now in Holland, on top of our GA meeting, we plan to review three subjects:

- 1) How to handle Comenius projects,
- 2) Conference on eating diseases and
- 3) Language Club-2 closing project.

Next EPA general meeting will be in Austria, near Salzburg, in April 2006 where we plan to have a conference related to sports education. The following meeting is not yet fixed. One possibility could be in Finland in November 2006. In this case, they will probably share the secrets of their educational system, which gained Finland first place in the PISA report.

We count on you and on your Association to make all these events happen together and we would appreciate any additional ideas to help EPA be a stronger and more useful association.

I would like to meet you in Holland on November 12th, 2005 and to talk personally with you. My best regards:

Diego Barroso
EPA President

SECRETARY GENERAL

INVITATION GENERAL ASSEMBLEE 11 – 13 NOVEMBER 2005

Place :

**Best Western Hotel Ernst Sillem Hoeve
Soestdijkerweg 10-b Lage Vuursche
3734 MH Den Dolder
Tel: 035 666 85 41
Fax: 035 666 84 43
info@esh.nl**

The Board of EPA is inviting you for the Autumn 2005 General Assembly which will be held in Nederland on the place and date mentioned above.

The agenda will be submitted to you after the Conference Call meeting of the Board on 6th October

The costs for this weekend are € 250 per person (including rooms, meals conference facilities and transport)

Important : To make reservations guaranteed participants have to pay before 1 november 2005 this € 250 on account number

104888482 On name of EPA

**IBAN number NL27 RABO 010488482
Swift code BIC RABONL 2U**

With mentioning : GA 2005 and name(s) of participant(s)

Your room is guaranteed until the first of November. After this date we can't guarantee your room / participation and/or the price will be higher

The (provisional) program at this moment is as follows

Friday 11 November 2005

18.30 Start
Meeting with drs Gerard Maas (European officer of the Dutch
Minister of Education- Dutch member of the Educational
Committee of the EU) -
yet to be confirmed

19.30 Diner

Saturday 12 November 2005

9.00h General Assembly

11.30h European programs – how to work with them
- European market place – “The dating bureau”
(EPA members are invited to seek and find partners under their
fellow members for future joined European
activities)

12.30h Lunch

14.00h Children and overweight – a presentation about a Dutch
campaign against problems as Obesities
- discussions and recommendations for National and European
policy makers

19.00h Diner

During the evening lobbying and socialising. (The hotel has two
bars, a small swimming pool with sauna, a fitness room and some
other facilities).

Sunday 13 November 2005 Depart

For any further information please contact Wendy Roos :wendy@ouders.net

mr. Werner J.V. van Katwijk
Secretary General EPA

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Practical information

Best Western Hotel Ernst Sillem Hoeve is situated in the centre of Nederland in the forest area between Utrecht and Hilversum. More information about the hotel can be found at www.esh.nl

The adress:

Best Western Hotel Ernst Sillem Hoeve
Soestdijkerweg 10-b Lage Vuursche
3734 MH Den Dolder
Tel: 035 666 85 41
Fax: 035 666 84 43
info@esh.nl

How to reach the hotel

We have organised a bus from Schiphol Airport to the Hotel in Den Dolder
On Friday 11 November there will be a buss available
At 15.00 h
And at 17.30 h

You will find the Blue buss (see photograph) at the main exit of Schiphol Airport (follow the information panels to the buss station/terminal for busses and taxis).



People who are not able to take one of these busses will have to take the train and taxi

Twice an hour there is a direct train from Schiphol to Hilversum Station

Time table

18.09	19.09	20.09	21.09	22.09	23.09
18.39	19.39	20.39	21.39	22.39	23.39

The latest train will be at 0.09. The duration of the trip will be 41 minutes

From Hilversum Central Station you will have to take the taxi to the Hotel

On Sunday

At 9.30 h a buss will take you from the hotel to the airport.
(arriving at Schiphol-airport approximately 10.30 h)