

**AGREEMENT ON
OBJECTIVES AND MANAGEMENT OF
EUROPEAN SCHOOLNET**

RECOGNISING the importance of developing the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) among schools in Europe and in particular to foster networking and cooperation between them,

HAVING regard to the Council resolution of 6 May 1996 (OJ No C 195, 6.7.1996, p.8) relating to educational multimedia software in the fields of education and training,

HAVING regard to the Communication (COM(96) 471 Final) by the Commission of the European Union to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions, concerning the Action Plan for a European education initiative "Learning in the Information Society,"

WELCOMING the proposal to set up a "European Schoolnet" presented by the Swedish Minister for School and Adult Education, Mrs Ylva Johansson, on 17 December 1996 at the closing session of the conference "Towards a European Electronic Network of Schools" organised by the Commission of the European Union in Brussels,

EMPHASISING the unanimous support for this proposal by the Informal Council Meeting (Education) in Amsterdam on 2-3 March 1997 upon the presentation of a first progress report,

WELCOMING the support of the Commission of the European Union for school networking in Europe and for the European Schoolnet proposal,

TAKING note of the resolution of the European Parliament of 26 June 1997 on the Communication of the Commission of the European Union "Learning in the Information Society" and the support therein for a European Schoolnet,

APPRECIATING the efforts invested by Sweden in terms of human, financial and technical resource to secure the launch of the European Schoolnet,

NOTING the legal establishment of the EUN Partnership – an international non-profit association under Belgian law - on 26 June 2002 with the purpose of being the legal representative of the European Schoolnet

NOTING the decision of the European Schoolnet Steering Committee on 12-13 June 2002 on its procedures

The signatories of this Agreement have agreed to set up among themselves the EUROPEAN SCHOOLNET INITIATIVE (EUN) and to constitute the EUROPEAN SCHOOLNET CONSORTIUM.

The Consortium does not form a legal personality in its own right.

Article 1

European Schoolnet's mission is to support its Ministries of Education, schools, teachers and any stakeholders in Europe in the transformation of education processes. EUN is positioned as an Ideas Lab that is able to help its Ministries develop policies to support the educational reform process at European level based on evidence and facts. The objectives of EUN are to:

- Provide services, content and tools based on ICT to members and partner networks
- Foster and support collaboration and cooperation among schools in Europe
- Support professional development of teachers, teacher trainers, school leaders and support staff
- Disseminate inspiring practice and investigate new models for schooling and learning
- Offer pedagogical and information services with European added value to schools in Europe
- Contribute to the development of technology-enhanced learning in schools

EUN works on three strategic areas:

- Providing usable evidence and data in the area of innovation in education to inform policy recommendations
- Supporting schools and teachers in their teaching practices
- Developing and sustaining a network of schools engaged in innovative teaching and learning approaches

Article 2

Membership of the European Schoolnet Consortium is open to Ministries of Education of the Member States of the European Union, of the countries of the European Free Trade Association, of other European countries and of third countries or to an organisation appointed by and representing such a Ministry.

On receiving a written request for membership of the European Schoolnet Consortium from a qualifying ministry or organisation, the Chairman of the Steering Committee shall circulate it to the Signatories of this Agreement and ask for a written opinion. When approved by 2/3 of the Signatories, the applicant organisation shall be invited to sign the Agreement upon which the membership will take effect on payment of the annual fee.

Article 3

Should a Signatory to this Agreement wish to withdraw and to end membership of the European Schoolnet Consortium, the Chairman of the Steering Committee shall be informed in writing. The Chairman shall circulate the notification to all members of the Steering Committee, which at its next meeting shall record the notification. The withdrawal shall then take effect at the end of the calendar year

Article 4

The governing body of the European Schoolnet is the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee may annually set up committees and working groups necessary for the effective attainment of the objectives of European Schoolnet and the implementation of the Work Programme

The Steering Committee shall appoint a EUN Executive Director for a period of five years with the responsibility to manage the EUN Office. The appointment can be renewed for other periods of five years. The EUN Office will provide the necessary supporting services for the Steering Committee, sub committees and working groups.

Article 5

The working language of the European Schoolnet is English.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Article 6

The Steering Committee is composed of one representative of each of the Signatories to this Agreement. If a country has more than one signatory, the representative of each signatory from this country has a fraction of vote equal to one divided by the number of signatories.

The Steering Committee is the decision-making body of the European Schoolnet. It shall be responsible for its general management and development and for monitoring its progress.

Within the framework of an Internal Regulation, the Steering Committee can delegate specific decision-making power to the Executive Director. Such a proposal must be tabled to all members of the Steering Committee at least ten days in advance and a decision must be approved by at least 2/3 of the members of the Steering Committee present at the meeting.

Article 7

By simple majority of the members present, the Steering Committee can invite observers to a meeting. An observer has no voting rights and can address the Committee on a specific issue on the invitation of the Chairman. This does not preclude the Steering Committee from holding closed meetings.

Article 8

The Steering Committee shall meet at least twice a year at the invitation of its Chairman. It shall have at least one meeting in the first half of the year and another one in the second half of the year. The first meeting will take stock of the development of European Schoolnet, adopt an Annual Report on the work and activities of the previous year as well as an Annual Financial Report for the previous year and have a preliminary discussion on the Work Programme for the next year based on an outline prepared by the EUN Office. The second meeting will adopt the Work Programme and the Budget for the following year.

The Chairman shall call a meeting whenever requested by at least one third of the members of the Steering Committee.

Invitations to meetings should be circulated to all members of the Steering Committee no later than six weeks in advance and a draft agenda of the meeting shall be circulated no later than three weeks before the meeting. Extraordinary meetings shall be called no later than one week in advance.

Article 9

In all decisions, each member of the Steering Committee has one vote. Decisions shall be adopted by simple majority if not specified otherwise in this Agreement. In the event of a tied vote, the Chairman shall cast the deciding vote.

The decisions and deliberations of the Steering Committee shall be recorded in Minutes of the meeting to be circulated to the members of the Steering Committee within three weeks of the meeting.

The Steering Committee can only adopt a decision when there is a quorum. A quorum is established when a majority of the members of the Steering Committee are present at a meeting called in accordance with Article 8.

Article 10

The Director of the EUN Office shall serve as Secretary to the Steering Committee.

WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORTING

Article 11

The Work Programme to be annually adopted by the Steering Committee shall set the annual operational objectives and priorities of European Schoolnet and the work to be carried out.

In order to allow the Steering Committee to adopt in accordance with Article 8 an Annual Report on the work and activities of European Schoolnet, the EUN Office shall circulate to the Committee a draft report within four months after the end of the year concerned.

The Steering Committee shall be regularly informed by the EUN Office on opportunities for the participation of European Schoolnet in Calls and Tenders issued by bodies of the European Union.

EUROPEAN SCHOOLNET CONSORTIUM AND EUN PARTNERSHIP AISBL

Article 12

To enable its operation, the European Schoolnet Consortium established an aisbl under Belgium law, called EUN Partnership, whose governing bodies are the Board of Directors and the General Assembly.

The Steering Committee shall every four years among itself elect a Chairman and Vice Chairs.

The Steering Committee decides on the number of Vice Chairs.

The Steering Committee shall appoint three of its members to serve as members of the Board of Directors for the EUN Partnership.

One of the Vice Chairs shall replace the Chairman in his or her functions whenever the Chairman is not able to serve.

Article 13

Interaction between European Schoolnet consortium and EUN Partnership aisbl: The European Schoolnet consortium is the political body of the network of Ministries of Education, whereas the EUN Partnership aisbl is the legal entity established under Belgium law for implementing the European Schoolnet objectives and work programme and responsible for its administrative and financial management.

SUBCOMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Article 14

In areas of particular importance to the development of the EUN, subcommittees or Working Groups can be set up by the Steering Committee. The general task of a subcommittee or a working group can be to:

- Bring together representatives of the members of the Consortium to address an area of common interest or a specific task or to
- Coordinate a set of activities or a specific project of the EUN

When setting up a subcommittee or working group, the Steering Committee shall also adopt the major objectives of the subcommittee or working group.

The EUN Office shall provide the necessary supporting service for subcommittees and working groups.

Each subcommittee and working group shall provide regular reports and in addition report to the Steering Committee when requested. Based on this, the Steering Committee may decide to stop the activities of the subcommittee or working group.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Article 15

The Steering Committee shall annually adopt a budget for European Schoolnet activities based on the Work Programme adopted by the Steering Committee. This budget shall provide all funding and incomes made available to European Schoolnet and EUN Partnership.

The EUN Executive Director shall present a draft budget to the Steering Committee, which shall be circulated no later than three weeks in advance of the meeting where the decision will be taken.

Article 16

Each Signatory to this Agreement shall pay an annual fee to the European Schoolnet.

The fee shall be decided upon by the Steering Committee by the simple majority of the members of the Steering Committee present. The fee shall be decided upon six months before the start of the calendar year to which it will apply.

The fee shall be paid into a bank account established for this purpose no later than one month after the start of the calendar year to which it applies. The Director of the EUN Office shall notify signatories, which fail to do so. Should a Signatory after two notifications with six weeks interval not have paid its fee, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Steering Committee. The Committee shall decide which appropriate actions are to be taken.

A Signatory paying an annual fee to the EUN Partnership can deduct an equivalent amount from the fee paid under this Agreement.

Article 17

Each Signatory of this Agreement shall be responsible for travel and accommodation costs for its representatives in meetings of the European Schoolnet.

Article 18

The EUN Executive Director shall be responsible for the financial accounts of the European Schoolnet and EUN Partnership and for the management of its assets within the framework of the EUN Budget.

Article 19

The EUN Executive Director shall present an Annual Financial Report before the end of the second quarter of the next calendar year, to be adopted by the Steering Committee and thereupon be circulated to the Signatories of this Agreement.

Article 20

The Steering Committee and EUN Partnership shall appoint an external auditor. The external auditor shall audit the financial accounts of the European Schoolnet and EUN Partnership and present an Annual Audit

Report to the Steering Committee, which shall adopt it and act upon any proposals included in the report. Upon adoption, the Annual Audit Report shall be circulated to the Signatories of this Agreement accompanied by a statement on decisions taken by the Steering Committee as regards the Report.

SIGNATURE

Article 21

Under the authority of the Steering Committee, its Chairman and the EUN Executive Director shall represent the European Schoolnet and have the right to the signature of the European Schoolnet.

AMENDMENT OF AGREEMENT

Article 22

When receiving a written request from a Signatory of this Agreement requesting the amendment of this Agreement, the Chairman of the Steering Committee shall circulate it to the Signatories and ask for a written opinion. When approved by 3/4 of the Signatories, the amendment shall be considered adopted and this Agreement changed accordingly.

DISSOLUTION

Article 23

When receiving a written request from a Signatory of this Agreement requesting the dissolution of the European Schoolnet Consortium, the Chairman of the Steering Committee shall circulate it to the Signatories and ask for a written opinion. When approved by 3/4 of the Signatories, the Chairman shall call a meeting of the Steering Committee to decide upon the terms of the dissolution including the distribution of assets of the Consortium. A proposal regarding the terms shall be circulated to all members of the Steering Committee six weeks in advance of the meeting.