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Emily O' Reilly
European Ombudsman
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Dear Ombudsman,

Following your letter of 19 December 2018, I am very pleased to share with you the latest developments of the various actions that the Commission is undertaking or actively supporting to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in the European Schools and support measures that the latter can offer.

Regarding the overall evaluation of the existing educational support policy in the European Schools, I can indeed confirm that national inspectors submitted their report to the Board of Governors in December 2018. In parallel, a specific working group, created to follow up the UNCRPD recommendations addressed to the European Schools, issued their report on 'Inclusive Education in the European Schools', which was also submitted to the Board of Governors. Both reports provide a list of recommendations to strengthen the Educational Support Policy further and to guide the schools in providing quality inclusive education. Based on those recommendations, a draft action plan was drawn up and discussed in various European Schools' decision-making bodies. Subsequently, the action plan was approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting in April 2019 and will be implemented by the European Schools.

As announced in the Commission's Diversity and Gender Equality Report and Action Plan in July 2018, an independent external feasibility study, assessing the implementation of the action plan and addressing any outstanding issues, is foreseen to be conducted in 2021.

Regarding the costs of schooling for children with disabilities, who cannot be accommodated in the European Schools, I confirm that the Commission has already started discussions with other EU institutions on the possibility to fully cover these costs. The Commission has been appointed chair of a newly created inter-institutional working group that is expected to start its works soon. Once all institutions reach an agreement on the draft text, other stakeholders, such as the EC Disability Support Group or the Association of Staff with a Disability in the European Commission (ASDEC), will be consulted.

Yours sincerely,

