

CONFERENCE / AGM

Kiev, Ukraine

Thursday 19 to Saturday 21 April 2018

[Hotel Khreschatyk](#)

14 Khreschatyk Str., 01001, Kiev

## Educational freedom and democratic changes - the role of Independent Schools in Ukraine

*A European perspective*

As representatives of a vital part of civil society, independent schools are important players in the process of democratization of the whole of society. Furthermore, there is growing evidence that independent schools are an important source of innovation and quality in national education systems. However, the status and role of independent schools varies greatly within Europe as national school systems are the outcome of long cultural-historical processes. In many cases, this process is strongly connected with the rise and development of the nation state. That's why in several countries the parents' right to establish and choose an independent (non-state) school is mentioned in the constitution.

Independent schools all over Europe, each with their own profile and curriculum, offer parents, students and - within the given variety of schools - also teachers, the opportunity to choose just that specific school, that best meets their own expectations, talents and skills. By so doing, independent schools are completing the different national school systems in Europe and contribute with school choice and innovative school practices to the modern social and economic development of their countries. In other countries, freedom of education is seen by the government as a privilege for the elite, leading to the misunderstanding that independent schools can do without any legislative recognition and public funding. For ECNAIS, a country that neglects the freedom of education will in the long run pay a price for it in terms of wasted talents of the new generation.

This is why we are very pleased to organize the 2018 ECNAIS Conference in Kiev, within the context of the Ukrainian educational reform.

The aim of the conference is to present and debate the role of independent schools in Ukraine within the context of the educational reform at hand, with an eye to the experiences of other European countries. By sharing experiences from national educational reforms with a special focus on the reform that is unfolding in Ukraine, we may better understand the connection between the ideals of freedom in education and the common European democratic values.

ECNAIS members from several other countries are eager to share with the Ukrainian delegation their own experiences and to contribute from a European perspective on the Ukrainian Educational Reform.

The points of departure for the Conference are the following questions:

- How does educational freedom promote innovation?
- How to balance value based school autonomy and accountability?
- How to balance freedom of parental school choice and equal opportunities within a national school system?
- What is the contribution of independent schools to the diversity in the national education system?

