

Speech at the Proclamation 2023, July 1st, by Deputy Director Julie Rørdam Thom

Dear representatives from the European School System, from the Copenhagen Municipality, from the European School Copenhagen Parents Association, teachers from the Upper Secondary, staff members, families and friends, parents and not least: students!

Congratulation all of you! The first European Baccalaureate students from European School Copenhagen. You did it! You made it through three hard years of studies where you have not only grown intellectually but you have also grown from being children to being young people.

To the parents: There have been nothing but new things along the way but yet you had the trust in the school to embark on this three year long journey. It has been a pleasure to have a chance to talk to you all Wednesday and Thursday when the students have come down the stairs. Thank you for the trust and the support in the school.

Back to the students: As European Baccalaureate students, you have delved into a vast array of disciplines, learning from the wisdom of

history, science, literature, and arts. In the pursuit of knowledge, you have discovered that life's meaning resides not solely in the answers but in the questions themselves. It is in the continual quest for truth and understanding that the richness of existence unfolds.

I am sure that amongst our students in this hall we have future adventurous scientists, brilliant teachers, innovative architects, outstanding doctors, bright artists, caring pedagogues. But even more importantly the students in this room are the nicest and most generous people I have met. If you lot represent your generation I have no concerns for the future of the world!

As I told you at the Prom: You are a very special bunch! Do you know what you are? You are generous with your time and yourselves and you are not afraid. I will give you one good example. Two days ago I realised that I had no music to accompany the singing at this Proclamation. I had trusted a technical solution and it didn't work. So when Ida came down from her last exam, I asked her if she would play on this short notice because I knew that she played the piano. She said yes and then she asked Luca if he would play her - and he said yes. Two days ago! This generosity and courage characterises the S7s of 2023!

There are many examples of how you have been generous with your time and yourselves and formed this school. Our collaboration around committees and initiatives started out from scratch in August 2020 with

cornerstones such as a social committee for parties and cafes, quite important, and a student council, also important. I remember sitting in my office in a meeting with the class representatives discussing what you wanted for the school, what your ideas and dreams were and what you were not happy about. Over time naturally, it was during Covid. Later we moved into the more specialised areas of student committees and formed a book club, a theatre group, an assembly group and a school band. You have engaged in climate and sustainability work. Continuously supported by the teachers. Later again, this year, a service committee with a focus on fund raising for good causes has been started, students have started recycling bottles and cans and given the money to good causes. A school football team has also come to life. This year we even had our own international evening, a student bread and butter initiative and already a tradition to be continued. See you all on November 17th when we will have the next International Evening. We have had a prom and a last school day with pranks on the teachers. Organised by the students alone. And the other day I was told that a Blue Book had been made. So much drive, so much organisational talent, so much willingness to start traditions and leave a mark at this school for future generations to pick up. Quite impressive!

Virginia Woolf asks in *To the lighthouse*:

"What is the meaning of life? That was all - a simple question; one that tended to close in on one with years, the great revelation had never

come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead, there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one."

With you lot - I have seen lots of little daily miracles along the way.

We mustn't forget what times you have taken your Baccalaureate in. Not just have you experienced Covid, You are also experiencing a Ukrainian -Russian war and you have embraced new students from Ukraine that came to us when the way started.

And in this context of the European School System it is almost symbolic to think that Marcel Decombis, the first headmaster of Luxembourg I is known for saying "Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, it will be borne in upon them as they mature that they belong together. Without ceasing to look to their own lands with love and pride, they will become in mind Europeans, schooled and ready to complete and consolidate the work of their fathers before them, to bring into being a united and thriving Europe."

You know what. That is what I have seen over the past days where you have been graduating, I have observed how you have made friendships across languages and cultures - I seems as if you really are in minds Europeans, or at least international, as I know that you come from many

different countries, also countries outside Europe. You are naturally inclusive and you look after and care about each other.

In an ever-changing and interconnected world, the European Baccalaureate equips you with the tools to bridge cultural divides, challenge conventional thinking, and strive for positive change. It instills in you the ability to critically analyze complex issues, to seek innovative solutions, and to appreciate the richness of diversity.

The European Baccalaureate is not just a mere diploma; it represents a harmonious blend of knowledge, cultural understanding, and the pursuit of excellence. It signifies a remarkable feat of education that transcends borders, connecting students from diverse backgrounds and forging a shared vision for a brighter future.

Today, we celebrate your pursuit of knowledge, your resilience in the face of challenges, and the infinite potential that lies within each of you. May you continue to find meaning in the smallest of moments, and may your lives be filled with a multitude of illuminations, as you shape a future that is both extraordinary and profound.

Congratulations, European Baccalaureate graduates!

First price for a European Baccalaureate student, S7, by the Parents Association by Chair Aarushi Chatterjee

Another surprise in the program is that the Parents Association of the European School Copenhagen, represented by chair Aarushi Chatterjee, has decided to give a recognition to a student who has invested extra time and efforts into making sure that the student voice is heard at this school. From this Proclamation and onwards the PA will give this recognition to a graduating student every year.

This year's student has from the beginning of their time at ESCPH been involved in the Student Council, they have been involved in the social committee, making sure that parties and cafes have run smoothly, they have been part of the group of experienced students that welcome new students, and they have supported PA activities. Sebastian Leiholt, S7DAB, please come up here.