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TO:
Ambassador Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
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Dear mr. Haack

The Association for Homeschooling has written to the German Embassy on two occasions in the past and also had telephonic discussions with Dr. Bodo Schaff. In our letter dated 13/1/2005, we brought it to your attention that homeschooling has a proven track record of success and that South African and International law recognises the right of parents to transfer their values to their children. The same points were re-iterated in our letter dated 4/12/2006.

Based on the press reports that the Association for Homeschooling has received, it seems that the German government has intensified the persecution of homeschooling parents and is increasingly in conflict with International law and European Law. It also seems that the German government has also extended it's persecution of homeschooling parents to citizens of other countries.

In this context, the purpose of this letter is twofold:

- 1) To gain a better understanding of the German Government's viewpoint on the rights of parents.
- 2) To clarify what advice the Association for Homeschooling should provide to homeschooling parents who consider visiting Germany for extended periods

GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING

In his response to our letter in 2006, dr. Bodo Schaff made the following statements:

- • "Daily contact with other students from all walks of life promotes tolerance, encourages dialogue among people of different beliefs and cultures, and helps students to become responsible citizens."
- • "The public has a legitimate interest in countering the rise of parallel societies that are based on religion or motivated by different world views and in integrating minorities into the population as a whole."

In order to gain a better understanding of these statements, we kindly request that you provide answers to the following questions.

- A) What empirical research has the German Government considered in order to conclude that children need to go to a school in order to learn tolerance, the ability to enter into dialogue and to be responsible citizens?
- B) What empirical research has the German Government considered in order to conclude the home learners will not master the above mentioned attributes as well as or better than institutionalised learners?

- C) On what legal, philosophical or moral grounds does the German state claim the power to counter the rise of parallel societies by the application of violent force (as it does with homeschooling parents) in order to integrate minorities into the state defined culture of the majority?
- D) On what grounds does the German Government justify its material and moral support of German schools and German home education in South Africa and neighbouring countries in view of its suppression of equivalent education on German territory?
- E) How does the German Government understand the freedom of religion if the German minister views it justifiable to "*bring the religious convictions of the family into line with the unalterable school attendance requirement*"
- F) To what extent does the German Government intend to comply with European and International law on the rights of children to be educated in the religion/philosophy, culture and traditions of their families and the rights of parents to choose for their children education that is in accord with their own convictions?

ADVICE TO SOUTH AFRICAN PARENTS

Since the press reports below indicate that the German Government has expanded its persecution of homeschooling families to foreign parents residing in Germany as well, it is important that South African homeschooling parents who consider visiting Germany for extended periods should be briefed on the risks associated with such a visit. In order to assist the Homeschooling Association with this, we kindly request that you provide answers to the following questions:

- G) What rights do South African homeschooling parents have in Germany in respect of the education of their children?
- H) What documentary proof should South African homeschooling parents take with them when they visit Germany in order to exercise their rights if such rights exist?
- I) Who can South African homeschooling parents contact in Germany, in the situation when an uninformed government official in Germany infringes on such rights if they exist?

If you judge that it could be beneficial, the Association for Homeschooling is more than willing to visit the German Embassy and have an interactive discussion in order to clarify possible misunderstandings between the South African homeschooling community and the German Government.

Kind Regards

Bouwe van der Eems

(Chairman : Association for Homeschooling)